

τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον.

Διῶκετε καὶ καθ'
ἐν παντί προφητεύειν
1 Cor. 14. 31.

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ΘΕΟΛΟΓΙΑ ἘΚΛΕΚΤΙΚΗ.

THE
Liberty of Prophefying.
With its just limits and temper.

W. Marshall sculpit



ΘΕΟΛΟΓΙΑ ΕΚΛΕΚΤΙΚΗ.

A
DISCOURSE
OF
The Liberty of Prophesying.

S H E W I N G
THE UNREASONABLENES
of prescribing to other mens Faith, and the
Iniquity of persecuting differing opinions.

By IER: TAYLOR, D. D. Chaplaine in
Ordinarie to His MAJESTIE.



L O N D O N
Printed for R. ROYSTON, at the Angel
in Ivie-lane. 1647.

DIARY OF

THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

OF THE TERRITORY OF ARIZONA

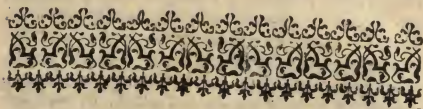
FROM 1863 TO 1865

BY

JOHN R. HARRIS



Published by the Government of the Territory of Arizona
at the Territorial Capital, Prescott, Arizona, U.S.A.
1866



To the Right Honourable
CHRISTOPHER Lord HATTON,
Baron HATTON of Kirby; Comptroler
of His Majesties Household, and one
of His Majesties most Honourable
Privie Councell.

My Lord,

IN this great Storm which hath dasht
the Vessell of the Church all in pieces,
I have been cast upon the Coast of
Wales, and in a little Boat thought
to have enjoyed that rest and quiet-
nesse, which in *England* in a greater I could not
hope for: Here I cast Anchor, and thinking to ride
safely, the Storm followed me with so impetuous
violence, that it broke a Cable, and I lost my An-
chor: And here again I was exposed to the mercy
of the Sea, and the gentlenesse of an Element that
could neither distinguish things nor persons. And
but that he who stilleth the raging of the Sea, and
the noise of his Waves, and the madnesse of his
people,

people, had provided a Plank for me, I had been lost to all the opportunities of content or study. But I know not whether I have been more preserved by the courtesies of my friends, or the gentleness and mercies of a noble Enemy: *Οἱ γὰρ βάρβαροι παρῆχον ἡ τὴν τυχεσάν φιλανθρωπίαν ἡμῖν, ἀνὰ-ψαλῖς γὰρ πυρὸν πορ- σιλᾶτορ πάλαις ἡμᾶς διὰ τὸ ὑπερ-τὸ ἐπιστῶτα καὶ διὰ τὸ ψύχθ.*

And now since I have come ashore, I have been gathering a few sticks to warm me, a few books to entertain my thoughts, and divert them from the perpetuall Meditation of my private Troubles, and the publike Dyscrasy, but those which I could obtain were so few and so impertinent, and unusefull to any great purposes, that I began to be sad upon a new stock, and full of apprehension that I should live unprofitably, and die obscurely, and be forgotten, and my bones thrown into some common charnell house, without any name or note to distinguish me from those who only served their Generation by filling the number of Citizens, and who could pretend to no thanks or reward from the Publike, beyond a *jus trium liberorum*. While I was troubled with these thoughts, and busie to find out an opportunity of doing some good in my small proportion, still the cares of the publike did so intervene, that it was as impossible to separate my design from relating to the present, as to exempt my selfe from the participation of the common calamity; still halfe my thoughts was (in despite of all my diversions and arts of avocation) fixt upon and mingled with the present concerns: so that besides them I could

not

not goe. Now because the great Question is concerning Religion, and in that also my Scene lies, I resolved here to fix my considerations, especially when I observed the wayes of promoting the severall opinions which now are busie, to be such, as besides that they were most troublesome to me, and such as I could by no meanes be friends withall, they were also such as to my understanding, did the most apparently disserve their ends whose design in advancing their own opinions was pretended for Religion: For as contrary as cruelty is to mercy, as tyranny to charity, so is warre and bloodshed to the meeknesse and gentlenesse of Christian Religion: And however that there are some exterminating spirits who think God to delight in humane sacrifices, as if that Oracle—*Καὶ πατέρα δέον εἶ τοῦ πνεύματος πατέρα*, had come from the Father of Spirits, yet if they were capable of coole and tame Homilies, or would hear men of other opinions give a quiet account without invincible resolutions never to alter their perswasions, I am very much perswaded it would not be very hard to dispute such men into mercies and compliances, and Tolerations mutuall, such I say, who are zealous for Jesus Christ; then whose Doctrine never was any thing more mercifull and humane, whose lessons were softer then Nard, or the juice of the Candian Olive: Upon the first apprehension, I design'd a Discourse to this purpose, with as much greedinesse as if I had thought it possible with my Arguments to have perswaded the rough and hard handed Souldiers to have disbanded presently: For

I had often thought of the Prophecy that in the Gospel, *our swords should be turned into plowshares, and our Speares into pruning books*; I knew that no tittle spoken by Gods Spirit could return unperform'd and ineffectuall, and I was certain, that such was the excellency of Christ's Doctrine, that if men would obey it, Christians should never warre one against another; in the mean time I considered not, that it was *prædictio consilii, non eventus*, till I saw what men were now doing, and ever had done since the heats and primitive fervours did coole; and the love of interests sweld higher then the love of Christianity; but then on the other side, I began to fear that whatever I could say would be as ineffectuall, as it could be reasonable: For if those excellent words, which our blessed Master spake, could not charm the tumult of our spirits, I had little reason to hope that one of the meanest and most ignorant of his servants could advance the end of that which he calls his great, and his old, and his new Commandement, so well as the excellency of his own Spirit and discourses could. And yet since he who knew every event of things, and the successe and efficacy of every Doctrine; and that very much of it to most men, and all of it to some men would be ineffectuall, yet was pleased to consign our duty that it might bee a direction to them that would, and a conviction and a Testimony against them that would not obey, I thought it might not misbecome my duty and endeavours to plead for peace and charity, and forgivenesse and permissions mutuall, although I had reason to believe that

that such is the iniquity of men, and they so indisposed to receive such impresses, that I had as good plow the Sands, or till the Aire, as perswade such Doctrines, which destroy mens interests, and serve no end but the great end of a happy eternity, and what is in order to it. But because the events of things are in Gods disposition, and I knew them not, and because if I had known my good purposes would be totally ineffectuall as to others, yet my own designation and purposes would be of advantage to my selfe; who might from Gods mercy expect the retribution which he is pleased to promise to all pious intendments; I resolved to encounter with all Objections, and to doe something to which I should be determined by the consideration of the present distemperatures and necessities, by my own thoughts, by the Questions and Scruples, the Sects and names, the interests and animosities which at this day, and for some years past have exercised and disquieted Christendome.

Thus farre I discourst my selfe into imployment, and having come thus farre, I knew not how to get farther, for I had heard of a great experience, how difficult it was to make Brick without Straw, and here I had even seen my design blasted in the bud, and I despaired in the Calends of doing what I purposed in the Ides before: For I had no Books of my own here, nor any in the voisinage, and but that I remembred the result of some of those excellent Discourses, I had heard your Lordship make when I was so happy as in private to gather up what your

temperance and modesty, forbids to be publick, I had come in *prælia inermis*, and like enough might have far'd accordingly. I had this only advantage besides; that I have chosen a Subject, in which, if my own reason does not abuse me, I needed no other books or aides, then what a man carries with him on horse-back, I meane the common principles of Christianity, and those *ἀξιώματα* which men use in the transactions of the ordinary occurrences of civill society; and upon the strength of them and some other collaterall assistances I have run through it *utrunque*, and the sum of the following Discourses, is nothing but the sense of these words of Scripture;

1 Cor. 13.

That since *we know in part, and prophesy in part, and that now we see through a glasse darkly*, wee should not *despise or contemn* persons not so knowing as our selves, but *him that is meek in the faith we should receive, but not to doubtfull disputations*; Therefore certainly to charity, and not to vexations, not to those which are the idle effects of impertinent wranglings. And provided they keep close to the *foundation*, which is *Faith and Obedience*, let them *build upon this foundation matter more or lesse precious*, yet if the foundation be intire, they *shall be saved with or without losse*. And since we professe our selves servants of so meek a Master, and Disciples of so charitable an Institute, *Let us walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called with all lowlinesse and meeknesse, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love*; for this is the best endeavouring

Rom. 14.

Ephes. 4. 2. 3.

deavours to keep the unity of the Spirit, when it is fast tyed in the bond of peace. And although it be a duty of Christianity, that we all speak the same thing, that there be no divisions among us, but that we be perfectly joyned together in the same mind, and in the same judgement, yet this unity is to be estimated according to the unity of faith, in things necessary, in matters of Creed, and Articles fundamentall; for as for other things, it is more to be wished then to be hoped for; there are some doubtfull Disputations, and in such the Scribe, the Wise, the Disputer of this world, are most commonly very farre from certainty, and many times from truth: There are diversity of perswasions in matters adiaphorous, as meats and drinks, and holy dayes, &c. and both parties, the affirmative and the negative, affirm and deny with innocence enough, for the observer and he that observes not, intend both to God; and God is our common Master, we all fellow servants, and not the judge of each other, in matters of conscience or doubtfull Disputation: And every man that hath faith must have it to himselfe before God, but no man must either in such matters judge his brother or set him at nought; but let us follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edifie another: And the way to doe that is not by knowledge, but by charity, for knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth; and since there is not in every man the same knowledge, but the conscience of some are weak; as my liberty must not be judged of another mans weak conscience, so must not I please my selfe so much

1 Cor. 12. 10.

Rom. 14.

1 Cor. 8. 1.

Vers. 7.

1 Cor. 10. 19.

Ibid.

Coloſ. 3. 14.

much in my right opinion, but I muſt alſo take order that his *weak conſcience be not offended or deſpiſed*, for no man muſt ſeek his own but every man anothers *wealtb*: And although we muſt contend earneſtly for the faith, yet above all things we muſt put on charity which is the bond of perfeſtneſſe: And therefore this contention muſt be with arms fit for the Chriſtian warfare, the ſword of the Spirit, and the ſhield of Faith, and preparation of the Goſpel of peace inſtead of ſhoes, and a helmet of ſalvation, but not with other armes, for a Church-man muſt not be *an angry*, a ſtriker, for the weapons of our warfare are not carnall but ſpirituell, and the perſons that uſe them ought to be gentle, and eaſy to be intreated, and we muſt give an account of our faith to them that ask us with meekneſſe and humility, for ſo is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to ſilence the ignorance of fooliſh men. Theſe and thouſands more to the ſame purpoſe are the Doctrines of Chriſtianity, whoſe ſenſe and intendment I have proſecuted in the following Diſcourſe, being very much diſpleaſed that ſo many opinions and new doctrines are commenc'd among us, but more troubled that every man that hath an opinion thinks his own and other mens ſalvation is concern'd in its maintenance, but moſt of all that men ſhould be persecuted and afflicted for diſagreeing in ſuch opinions which they cannot with ſufficient grounds obtrude upon others neceſſarily, becauſe they cannot propound them infallibly, and becauſe they have no warrant from Scripture ſo to doe: For if I ſhall tie other men to believe
my

my opinion, because I think I have a place of Scripture, which seems to warrant it to my understanding, why may he not serve up another dish to me in the same dresse, and exact the same task of me to believe the contradictory: And then since all the Hereticks in the world have offered to prove their Articles by the same meanes by which true believers propound theirs, it is necessary that some separation either of Doctrine or of persons be clearly made, that all pretences may not be admitted, nor any just Allegations be rejected; and yet that in some other Questions whether they be truly or falsely pretended if not evidently or demonstratively, there may be considerations had to the persons of men and to the Laws of charity more then to the triumphing in any opinion or doctrine not simply necessary. Now because some doctrines are clearly not necessary, and some are absolutely necessary, why may not the first separation be made upon this difference, and Articles necessary be only urg'd as necessary, and the rest left to men indifferently, as they were by the Scripture indeterminately. And it were well if men would as much consider themselves as the Doctrines, and think that they may as well be deceiv'd by their own weaknesse, as perswaded by the Arguments of a Doctrine which other men, as wise, call inevident. For it is a hard case that we shall think all Papists and Anabaptists and Sacramentaries to be fooles and wicked persons, certainly among all these Sects there are very many wise men and good men, as well as erring; and although some zeales are so hot, and their eyes so

b

inflamed

inflamed with their ardors, that they doe not think their Adversaries look like other men, yet certainly we find by the results of their discourses, and the transactions of their affaires of civill society, that they are men that speak and make syllogismes, and use reason, and read Scripture, and although they do no more understand all of it, then we doe, yet they endeavour to understand as much as concerns them, even all that they can, even all that concerns repentance from dead works, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ: And therefore me thinks this also should be another consideration distinguishing the persons; for if the persons be Christians in their lives, and Christians in their profession; if they acknowledge the Eternall Sonne of God for their Master and their Lord, and live in all relations as becomes persons making such professions, why then should I hate such persons whom God loves, and who love God, who are partakers of Christ; and Christ hath a title to them, who dwell in Christ, and Christ in them, because their understandings have not been brought up like mine, have not had the same Masters, they have not met with the same books, nor the same company, or have not the same interest, or are not so wise, or else are wiser, (that is, for some reason or other which I neither doe understand, nor ought to blame) have not the same opinions that I have, and do not determine their Schoole Questions to the sense of my Sect or interest.

But now I know before hand, that those men who will endure none but their own Sect, will make all manner

manner of attempts against these purposes of charity and compliance, and say I, or doe I what I can, will tell all their Profelytes that I preach indifferency of Religion, that I say it is no matter how we believe, nor what they professe: But that they may comply with all Sects, and doe violence to their own consciences, that they may be sav'd in all Religions, and so make way for a *colluvies* of Heresies, and by consequence destroy all Religion. Nay, they will say worse then all this, and but that I am not used to their phrases and formes of declamation, I am perswaded I might represent fine Tragedies before hand. And this will be such an objection, that although I am most confident I shall make apparent to be as false and scandalous as the Objectors themselves are zealous and impatient, yet besides that, I believe the Objection will come where my answers will not come, or not be understood; I am also confident that in defiance and incuriousnesse of all that I shall say, some men will persist pertinaciously in the accusation, and deny my conclusion in despite of mee: well, but however I will try.

And first I answer, that whatsoever is against the foundation of Faith, or contrary to good life and the lawes of obedience, or destructive to humane society, and the publick and just interests of bodies politick, is out of the limits of my Question, and does not pretend to compliance or toleration: So that I allow no indifferency, nor any countenance to those Religions whose principles destroy Govern-

ment, nor to those Religions (if there be any such) that teach ill life, nor doe I think that any thing will now excuse from beliefe of a fundamentall Article, except stupidity or sottishnesse and naturall inhability. This alone is sufficient answer to this vanity, but I have much more to say.

Secondly, The intendment of my Discourse is, that permissions should be in Questions speculative, indeterminable, curious, and unnecessary, and that men would not make more necessities then God made, which indeed are not many. The fault I find and seek to remedy is, that men are so dogmaticall and resolute in their opinions, and impatient of others disagreeings in those things wherein is no sufficient meanes of union and determination, but that men should let opinions and problemes keep their own forms, and not be obtruded as axiomes, nor questions in the vast collection of the Systeme of Divinity, be adopted into the family of Faith: And I think I have reason to desire this.

Thirdly, It is hard to say, that he who would not have men put to death, or punished corporally for such things, for which no humane Authority is sufficient either for cognisance or determination, or competent for infliction, that he perswades to an indifferency, when he referres to another Judiciary, which is competent, sufficient, infallible, just, and highly severe. No man or company of men can judge or punish our thoughts, or secret purposes whilest they so remaine, and yet it will be unequall to say, that he who owns this Doctrine preaches it
lawfull

lawfull to men to think or purpose what they will. And so it is in matters of doubtfull disputation (such as are the distinguishing Articles of most of the Sects of Christendome:) So it is in matters intellectuall (which are not cognoscible by a secular power) in matters spirituall (which are to be discerned by spirituall Authority, which cannot make corporall inflections) and in Questions indeterminate, (which are doubtfully propounded or obscurely, and therefore may be in *utramque partem* disputed or believed;) for God alone must be Judge of these matters, who alone is Master of our souls, and hath a dominion over humane understanding, and he that sayes this, does not say that indifferency is perswaded, because God alone is Judge of erring persons.

Fourthly, No part of this Discourse teaches or encourages variety of Sects, and contradiction in opinions, but supposes them already in being, and therefore since there are, and ever were, and ever will be variety of opinions, because there is variety of humane understandings, and uncertainty in things, no man should be too forward in determining all Questions, nor so forward in prescribing to others, nor invade that liberty which God hath left to us intire by propounding many things obscurely, and by exempting our souls and understandings from all power externally compulsory: So that the restraint is laid upon mens tyranny, but no license given to mens opinions, they are not considered in any of the Conclusions, but in the premises only as an Argument to exhort to charity. So that if I perswade a license

of discrediting any thing which God hath commanded us to believe, and allow a liberty where God hath not allowed it, let it be shewn, and let the Objection presse as hard as it can; but to say that men are too forward in condemning where God hath declared no sentence nor prescribed any rule; is to dissuade from tyranny, not to encourage licentiousnesse, is to take away a license of judging, not to give a license of dogmatizing what every one please, or as may best serve his turn. And for the other part of the Objection;

Fifthly, This Discourse is so farre from giving leave to men to professe any thing though they believe the contrary, that it takes order that no man shall bee put to it, for I earnestly contend that another mans opinion shall be no rule to mine, and that my opinion shall be no snare and prejudice to my selfe, that men use one another so charitably and so gently, that no errour or violence tempt men to hypocrisy, this very thing being one of the Arguments I use to perswade permissions, lest compulsion introduce hypocrisy, and make sincerity troublesome and unsafe.

Sixthly, If men would not call all opinions by the name of Religion, and superstructures by the name of fundamentall Articles, and all fancies by the glorious appellative of Faith, this objection would have no pretence or footing, so that it is the disease of the men, not any cause that is ministered by such precepts of charity that makes them perpetually clamorous: And it would be hard to say
that

that such Physicians are incurious of their Patients, and neglectfull of their health, who speak against the unreasonableness of such Empericks that would cut off a mans head if they see but a Wart upon his cheek, or a dimple upon his chin, or any lines in his face to distinguish him from another man; the case is altogether the same, and we may as well decree a Wart to be mortall as a various opinion in *re alioqui non necessariâ* to be capitall and damnable.

For I consider, that there are but few Doctrines of Christianity, that were ordered to be preached to all the world, to every single person, and made a necessary Article of his explicate believe: Other Doctrines which are all of them not simply necessary, are either such as are not clearly revealed, or such as are: If they be clearly revealed, and that I know so too, or may, but for my own fault, I am not to be excused, but for this I am to be left to Gods judgement, unlesse my fault be externally such as to be cognoscible and punishable in humane judicatory: But then, if it be not so revealed but that wise men and good men differ in their opinions, it is a clear case, it is not *inter dogmata necessaria simpliciter*, and then it is certain I may therefore safely disbelieve it, because I may be safely ignorant of it: For if I may with innocence be ignorant, then to know it or believe it, is not simply obligatory; ignorance is absolutely inconsistent with such an obligation, because it is destructive and

and a plaine negative to its performance, and if I doe my honest endeavour to understand it, and yet doe not attain it, it is certain that is not obligatory to me so much as by accident, for no obligation can presse the person of a man if it be impossible, no man is bound to doe more then his best, no man is bound to have an excellent understanding, or to be infallible, or to be wiser then he can, for these are things that are not in his choyce, and therefore not a matter of a Law, nor subject to reward and punishment; so that where ignorance of the Article is not a sin, there disbelieving it in the right sense, or believing it in the wrong, is not breach of any duty, essentially or accidentally necessary, neither in the thing it selfe, nor to the person; that is, he is neither bound to the Article, nor to any endeavours or antecedent acts of volition and choyce, and that man who may safely bee ignorant of the proposition, is not tyed at all to search it out, and if not at all to search it, then certainly not to find it: All the obligation we are capable of, is not to be malicious or voluntarily criminall in any kind, and then if by accident we find out a truth, we are obliged to believe it; and so will every wise or good man doe; indeed he cannot doe otherwise: But if he disbelieves an Article without malice, or design, or involuntarily, or unknowingly, it is contradiction to say it is a sinne to him who might totally have been ignorant of it; for that he believes it in the wrong sense, it is his ignorance,

ignorance, and it is impossible that where he hath heartily endeavoured to finde out a truth, that this endeavour should make him guilty of a sinne, which would never have been laid to his charge, if he had taken no paines at all: His ignorance in this case is not a fault at all; possibly it might, if there had been no endeavour to have cur'd it.

So that there is wholly a mistake in this proposition: For true it is, there are some propositions, which if a man never heare of; they will not be required of him; and they who cannot read might safely be ignorant, that *Melchizedeck* was King of *Salem*; but he who reads it in the Scripture, may not safely contradict it, although before that knowledge did arrive to him, he might safely have been ignorant of it: But this although it be true, is not pertinent to our Question; For *in sensu diviso* this is true, that which at one time a man may be ignorant of, at some other time he may not disbelieve: But *in sensu conjuncto* it is false; For at what time, and in what circumstance soever it is no sinne to be ignorant, at that time and in that conjuncture, it is no sinne to disbelieve; and such is the nature of all Questions disputable, which are therefore not required of us to bee believed in any one particular sense, because the nature of the thing is such as not to be necessary to be known at all simply and
c absolutely,

absolutely, and such is the ambiguity and cloud of its face and representment as not to be necessary so much as by accident, and therefore not to the particular sence of any one person.

And yet such is the iniquity of men, that they suck in opinions as wild Asses doe the wind, without distinguishing the wholesome from the corrupted ayre, and then live upon it at a venture, and when all their confidence is built upon zeale and mistake, yet therefore because they are zealous and mistaken, they are impatient of contradiction.

But besides that against this I have laid prejudice enough from the dictates of holy Scripture, it is observable that this with its appendant degrees, I meane restraint of Propheying, imposing upon other mens understanding, being masters of their consciences, and lording it over their Faith, came in with the retinue and traine of Antichrist, that is, they came as other abuses and corruptions of the Church did, by reason of the iniquity of times, and the cooling of the first heats of Christianity, and the encrease of interest, and the abatements of Christian simplicity, when the Churches fortune grew better, and her Sonnes grow worse, and some of her Fathers worst of all; For in the first three hundred years there was no sign of persecuting any man for his opinion, though at that time there

there were very horrid opinions commenced, and such which were exemplary and parallel enough to determine this Question; for they then were assaulted by new Sects which destroyed the common principles of nature, of Christianity, of innocence and publike society; and they who used all the meanes Christian and Spirituall for their disimprovement and conviction; thought not of using corporall force, otherwise then by blaming such proceedings: And therefore I doe not only urge their not doing it as an Argument of the unlawfulnessse of such proceeding, but their defying it and speaking against such practises; as unreasonable and destructive of Christianity: For so *Tertullian* is expresse, *Ad Scapular,*
Humani juris & naturalis potestatis, unicuique quod putaverit colere, sed nec religionis est cogere religionem, quæ suscipi debet sponte non vi: The same is the Doctrine of *S. Cyprian, Lactantius, S. Hilary, Minutius Felix, Sulpitius Severus, S. Chrysostome, S. Hierom, S. Austin, Damasceen, Theophylact, Socrates, Scholasticus, and S. Bernard*, as they are severally referr'd to and urg'd upon occasion in the following Discourse.

To which I adde, that all wise Princes till they were overborn with faction or sollicitated by peevisish persons, gave Toleration to differing Sects, whose opinions did not disturb the publike interest: But at first, there were some hereticall persons that were also impatient of an

Adversary, and they were the men who at first entreated the Emperours to persecute the Catholicks; but till foure hundred yeares after Christ, no Catholick persons, or very few, did provoke the secular arme, or implore its aide against the Hereticks, save only that *Arrius* behav'd himselfe so seditiously and tumultuarily, that the *Nicene* Fathers procur'd a temporary Decree for his relegation, but it was soon taken off and God left to be his Judge; who indeed did it to some purpose, when he was trusted with it and the matter wholly left to him.

But as the Ages grew worse, so men grew more cruell and unchristian, and in the Greek Church *Atticus*, and *Nestorius* of *Constantinople*, *Theodosius* of *Synada*, and some few others who had forgotten the mercies of their great Master, and their own duty, grew implacable and furious and impatient of contradiction. It was a bold and an arrogant speech which *Nestorius* made in his Sermon before *Theodosius* the younger, *Da mihi, O Imperator, terram ab hæreticis repurgatam, & ego tibi vicissim cælum dabo: Disperde mecum hæreticos, & ego tecum disperdam Persas*: It was as groundlesse and unwarrantable, as it was bloody and inhumane.

And we see the contrary events prove truer, then this groundlesse and unlearned promise; for *Theodosius* and *Valentinian* were prosperous Princes,

Princes, and have to all Ages a precious memory, and the reputation of a great piety; but they were so farre from doing what *Nestorius* had suggested, that they restrained him from his violence and immanity, and *Theodosius* did highly commend the good Bishop *Proclus* for his sweetnesse of deportment towards erring persons, far above the cruelty of his Predecessor *Atticus*: And the experience which Christendom hath had in this last Age is Argument enough, that Toleration of differing opinions is so farre from disturbing the publick peace, or destroying the interest of Princes and Commonwealths, that it does advantage to the publick, it secures peace, because there is not so much as the pretence of Religion left to such persons to contend for it, being already indulged to them. When *France* fought against the *Huguenots*, the spilling of her own blood was argument enough of the imprudence of that way of promoting Religion; but since she hath given permission to them, the world is witness how prosperous she hath been ever since. But the great instance is in the differing temper, Government and successe which *Margaret of Parma*, and the Duke of *Alva* had: The clemency of the first had almost extinguished the flame; but when she was removed, *D'Alva* succeeded and managed the matter of Religion with fire and sword, he made the flame so great,

that his Religion and his Prince too hath both been almost quite turned out of the Countrey. *Pelli è medio sapientiam, quoties vi res agitur*, said *Ennius*; and therefore the best of men, and the most glorious of Princes were alwayes ready to give Toleration, but never to make executions for matters disputable: *Eusebius* in his second Book of the life of *Constantine* reports these words of the *Emperour*, *Parem cum fidelibus ii qui errant, pascis & quietis fruitionem gaudentes accipiant: Ipsa siquidem communicationis & societatis restitutio ad rectam etiam veritatis viam perducere potest. Nemo cuiquam molestus sit, quisque quod animo destinat hoc etiam faciat.*

And indeed there is great reason for Princes to give Toleration to disagreeing persons, whose opinions by faire meanes cannot be altered; for if the persons be confident, they will serve God according to their perswasions; and if they be publikely prohibited, they will privately convene, and then all those inconveniences and mischiefs which are Arguments against the permission of Conventicles, are Arguments for the publick permissions of differing Religions, because the denying of the publick worship will certainly produce private Conventicles, against which all wise Princes and Common-Wealths have upon great reasons made Edicts and severe Sanctions, *Quicquid enim agitur absente*

absente rege, in caput ejus plerunque redundat, say the Politicks : For the face of a man is as the face of a Lion, and scatters all base machinations which breath not but in the dark : It is a proverbiall saying, *quod nimia familiaritas servorum est conspiratio adversus Dominum,* and they who for their security runne into grots and cellars, and retirements, think that they being upon the defensive, those Princes and those Lawes that drive them to it are their Enemies, and therefore they cannot be secure, unlesse the power of the one, and the obligation of the other be lessened and rescinded; and then the being restrained and made miserable, endears the discontented persons mutually, and makes more hearty and dangerous Confederations. King James of blessed memory, in his Letters to the States of the United Provinces, dated 6 March. 1613. Thus wrote . . . *Magis autem e re fore si sopiantur auctoritate publica, ita ut prohibeatis Ministros vestros ne eas disputationes in suggestum aut ad plebem ferant, ac districtè imperetis ut pacem colant se invicem Tolerando in istà opinionum ac sententiarum discrepantiâ: Eoque justius videmur vobis hoc ipsum suadere debere quod neutram comperimus adeò deviam ut non possint & cum fidei Christianæ veritate, & cum animarum salute consistere, &c.* The like Councell in the divisions of Germany, at the first Reformation was thought reason.

reasonable by the Emperour *Ferdinand*, and his excellent Sonne *Maximilian*; For they had observed that violence did exasperate, was unblest, unsuccessfull and unreasonable, and therefore they made Decrees of Toleration, and appointed tempers and expedients to be drawn up by discreet persons, and *George Cassander* was design'd to this great work, and did something towards it: And *Emanuel Philibert*, D. of *Savoy* repenting of his warre undertaken for Religion against the *Pedemontans*, promised them Toleration, and was as good as his word: As much is done by the Nobility of *Polonia*. So that the best Princes and the best Bishops gave Toleration and Impunities; but it is known that the first Persecutions of disagreeing persons were by the *Arrians*, by the *Circumcellians* and *Donatists*, and from them, they of the Church took examples, who in small numbers did sometime perswade it, sometime practise it. And among the Greeks it became a publick and authorized practise, till the Question of Images grew hot and high; for then the Worshippers of Images having taken their example from the Empresse *Irene*, who put her Sonnes eyes out for making an Edict against Images, began to be as cruell as they were deceived, especially being encouraged by the Popes of *Rome*, who then blew the coales to some purpose.

And that I may upon this occasion give account

count of this affaire in the Church of *Rome*, it is remarkable that till the time of *Iustinian* the Emperour, *A.D. 525.* the Catholicks and *Novatians* had Churches indifferently permitted even in *Rome* it selfe, but the Bishops of *Rome* whose interest was much concerned in it, spoke much against it, and laboured the eradication of the *Novatians*, and at last when they got power into their hands they served them accordingly, but it is observed by *Socrates* that when the first Persecution was made against them at *Rome* by Pope *Innocent I.* at the same instant the *Goths* invaded *Italy*, and became Lords of all, it being just in God to bring a Persecution upon them for true beliefe, who with an incompetent Authority and insufficient grounds doe persecute an errour lesse materiall, in persons agreeing with them in the profession of the same common faith. And I have heard it observ'd as a blessing upon *S. Austin* (who was so mercifull to erring persons as the greatest part of his life in all senses, even when he had twice chang'd his mind, yet to Tolerate them, and never to endure they should be given over to the secular power to be kild) that the very night the *Vandals* set down before his City of *Hippo* to besiege it, he dyed and went to God, being (as a reward of his mercifull Doctrine) taken from the miseries to come, and yet that very thing was also a par-

cular issue of the Divine Providence upon that City, who not long before had altered their profession into truth by force, and now were falling into their power, who afterward by a greater force turned them to be *Arrians*.

But in the Church of *Rome*, the Popes were the first Preachers of force and violence in matters of opinion, and that so zealously, that Pope *Vigilius* suffered himselfe to be imprisoned and handled roughly by the Emperour *Iustinian*, rather then he would consent to the restitution and peace of certain disagreeing persons, but as yet it came not so farre as death. The first that preached that Doctrine was *Dominick*, the Founder of the Begging Orders of Friers, the Friers Preachers; in memory of which the Inquisition is intrusted only to the Friers of his Order; and if there be any force in dreams, or truth in Legends (as there is not much in either) this very thing might be signified by his Mothers dreame, who the night before *Dominick* was born, dream'd she was brought to Bed of a huge Dog with a fire-brand in his mouth: Sure enough, however his disciples expound the dreame, it was a better sign that he should prove a rabid, furious Incendiary, then any thing else; whatever he might be in the other parts of his life, in this Doctrine he was not much better, as appears in his deportment toward the *Albigenses*, against whom hee so preached

preached, *adeo quidem ut centum hereticorum millia ab octo millibus Catholicorum fusa & interfecta fuisse peribeanantur*, saith one of him; and of those who were taken, 180 were burnt to death, because they would not abjure their Doctrine: This was the first example of putting erring persons to death, that I find in the Roman Church; For about 170 years before, *Berengarius* fell into opinion concerning the blessed Sacrament which they cald Heresy, and recanted, and relapsed, and recanted againe, and fell again two or three times, saith *Gerson* writing against *Romant* of the *Rose*, and yet he died *sicâ morte* his own naturall death, and with hope of Heaven, and yet *Hildebrand* was once his judge, which shewes that at that time Rome was not come to so great heighths of bloodshed. In *England*, although the Pope had as great power here as any where, yet there were no Executions for matter of opinion known till the time of *Henry* the Fourth, who (because he Usurped the Crown) was willing by all means to endear the Clergy by destroying their Enemies, that so he might be sure of them to all his purposes. And indeed, it may become them well enough, who are wiser in their generations then the children of light, it may possibly serve the pollicies of evill persons, but never the pure and chaste designs of Christianity, which admits no blood but Christs, and the imitating

B. Bruno Berengarianos
 è suâ diocesi
 expulsi, non
 morti aut sup-
 plicii corpora-
 libus tradi-
 dit.

blood of Martyrs, but knowes nothing how to serve her ends, by persecuting any of her erring children.

By this time I hope it will not be thought reasonable to say, he that teaches mercy to erring persons, teaches indifferency in Religion, unlesse so many Fathers, and so many Churches, and the best of Emperours, and all the world (till they were abused by Tyranny, Popery, and Faction) did teach indifferency, for I have shewn that Christianity does not punish corporally, persons erring spiritually, but indeed Popery does; The *Donatists*, and *Circumcellians*, and *Arrians*, and the *Itaciani*, they of old did: In the middle Ages, the Patrons of Images did, and the Papists at this day doe, and have done ever since they were taught it by their *S. Dominick*.

Seventhly, And yet after all this, I have something more to exempt my selfe from the clamour of this Objection: For let all errors be as much and as zealously suppressed as may be, (the Doctrine of the following Discourse contradicts not that) but let it be done by such meanes as are proper instruments of their suppression, by Preaching and Disputation (so that neither of them breed disturbance) by charity and sweetness, by holiness of life, assiduity of exhortation, by the word of God and prayer.

For these wayes are most naturall, most prudent,
most

most peaceable, and effectually. Only let not men be hasty in calling every dislike'd opinion by the name of Heresy, and when they have resolved, that they will call it so, let them use the erring person like a brother, not beat him like a dog, or convince him with a gibbet, or vex him out of his understanding and persuasions.

And now if men will still say, I perswade to indifferency, there is no help for me, for I have given reasons against it, I must beare it as well as I can, I am not yet without remedy as they are, for patience will help me, and reason will not cure them, let them take their course, and Ile take mine:

Only I will take leave to consider this (and they would doe well to doe so too) that unlesse Faith be kept within its own latitude, and not cald out to patrocinate every lesse necessary opinion, and the interest of every Sect, or peevish person; and if damnation be pronounced against Christians believing the Creed, and living good lives, because they are deceived, or are said to be deceived in some opinions lesse necessary, there is no way in the world to satisfie unlearned persons in the choice of their Religion, or to appease the unquietnesse of a scrupulous conscience: For suppose an honest Citizen whose employment and parts will not enable him to judge the disputes and arguings

of great Clerks, sees factions commenced and managed with much bitterness by persons who might on either hand be fit enough to guide him; when if he follows either, he is disquieted and pronounced damned by the other (who also if he be the most unreasonable in his opinion, will perhaps be more furious in his sentence) what shall this man doe, where shall he rest the sole of his foot? Upon the Doctrine of the Church where he lives? Well! but that he heares declaimed against perpetually, and other Churches claime highly and pretend fairely for truth, and condemne his Church: If I tell him that he must live a good life, and believe the Creed, and not trouble himselfe with their disputes, or interesting himselfe in Sects and Factions, I speak reason: Because no law of God ties him to believe more then what is of essentiall necessity, and whatsoever he shall come to know to be reveal'd by God: Now if he believes his Creed, he believes all that is necessary to all, or of it selfe, and if he doe his morall endeavour beside, he can doe no more toward finding out all the rest, and then he is secured; but then if this will secure him, why doe men presse further and pretend every opinion as necessary, and that in so high degree that if they all said true, or any two indeed of them, in 500 Sects which are in the world (and for ought I know there may be 5000) it is 500 to one
but

but that every man is damn'd, for every Sect damnes all but it selfe, and that is damn'd of 499, and it is excellent fortune then if that escape; and there is the same reason in every one of them, that is, it is extreme unreasonable in all of them to pronounce damnation against such persons against whom clearely and dogmatically holy Scripture hath not; *In odiosis quod minimum est sequimur, in favoribus quod est maximum*, saith the Law, and therefore we should say any thing, or make any excuse that is in any degree reasonable, rather then condemn all the world to Hell, especially if we consider these two things, that we our selves are as apt to be deceived as any are, and that they who are deceived, when they used their morall industry that they might not be deceived, if they perish for this, they perish for what they could nor help.

But however, if the best security in the world be not in neglecting all Sects, and subdivisions of men, and fixing our selves on points necessary and plain, and on honest and pious endeavours, according to our severall capacities and opportunities for all the rest, if I say all this be not through the mercies of God, the best security to all unlearned persons, and learned too, where shall we fix, where shall we either have peace or security? If you bid me follow your Doctrine, you must tell me why, and per-
haps

haps when you have I am not able to judge, or if I be as able as other people are, yet when I have judged, I may be deceived too, and so may you, or any man else you bid me follow, so that I am no whit the nearer truth or peace.

And then if we look abroad, and consider how there is scarce any Church, but is highly charg'd by many Adversaries in many things, possibly we may see a reason to charge every one of them in some things; And what shall we do then? The Church of *Rome* hath spots enough, and all the world is inquisitive enough to find out more, and to represent these to her greatest disadvantage. The Greek Church denies the procession of the holy Ghost from the Son; If that be false Doctrine, she is highly too blame, if it be not, then all the Western Churches are too blame for saying the contrary: And there is no Church that is in prosperity, but alters her Doctrine every Age, either by bringing in new Doctrines, or by contradicting her old, which shewes that none are satisfied with themselves, or with their own confessions: And since all Churches believe themselves fallible, that only excepted which all other Churches say is most of all deceived, it were strange if in so many Articles which make up their severall bodies of Confessions, they had not mistaken every one of them in something or other: The *Lutheran* Churches maintaine Consubstantiation, the *Zuinglians*

Zuinglians are Sacramentaries, the *Calvinists* are fierce in the matters of absolute Predetermination, and all these reject Episcopacy, which the Primitive Church would have made no doubt to have called Heresy: The *Socinians* profess a portentous number of strange opinions; they deny the holy Trinity, and the satisfaction of our blessed Saviour: The *Anabaptists* laugh at Pædo-baptism; The *Ethiopian Churches* are *Nestorian*: where then shall we fix our confidence, or joyn Communion? to pitch upon any one of these is to throw the dice, if salvation be to be had only in one of them, and that every error that by chance hath made a Sect, and is distinguished by a name, be damnable.

If this consideration does not deceive me, we have no other help in the midst of these distractions, and dis-unions, but all of us to be united in that common terme, which as it does constitute the Church in its being such, so it is the medium of the Communion of Saints, and that is the Creed of the Apostles, and in all other things an honest endeavour to find out * what truths we can, and a charitable and mutuall permission to others that disagree from us and our opinions. I am sure this may satisfy us, for it will secure us, but I know not any thing else

* Clem. Alex. Stromat. I. sic Philosophiam liberam esse præstantissimam, quæ seil. versatur in perspicaciter seligendis dog-

matris omnium Sectarum, Porphyrio Alexandrinus sic primus philosophus est, ut ait Lærentius in Proœmio, unde cognominatus est, ἡ φιλοσοφία, scil. τὰ ἀρίστα ἐκ πάντων τῶν διδασκάλων.

that will, and no man can be reasonably perswaded, or satisfied in any thing else, unlesse he throwes himselfe upon chance, or absolute predestination, or his own confidence, in every one of which it is two to one at least but he may miscarry.

Thus farre I thought I had reason on my side, and I suppose I have made it good upon its proper grounds, in the pages following. But then if the result be, that men must be permitted in their opinions, and that Christians must not Persecute Christians; I have also as much reason to reprove all those oblique Arts which are not direct Persecutions of mens persons, but they are indirect proceedings, ungentle and unchristian, servants of faction and interest, provocations to zeal and animosities, and destructive of learning and ingenuity. And these are suppressing all the monuments of their Adversaries, forcing them to recant, and burning their Books.

For it is a strange industry, and an importune diligence that was used by our fore-fathers; of all those Heresies which gave them battle and employment, we have absolutely no Record or Monument, but what themselves who were Adversaries have transmitted to us, and we know that Adversaries, especially such who observ'd all opportunities to discredit both the persons and doctrines of the Enemy, are not alwayes the
best

best records or witnesses of such transactions. We see it now in this very Age, in the present distemperatures, that parties are no good Registers of the actions of the adverse side : And if we cannot be confident of the truth of a story now, now I say that it is possible for any man, and likely that the interess'd adversary will discover the imposture, it is farre more unlikely, that after Ages should know any other truth, but such as serves the ends of the representers: I am sure such things were never taught us by Christ and his Apostles, and if we were sure that our selves spoke truth, or that truth were able to justify her selfe, it were better if to preserve a Doctrine wee did not destroy a Commandement, and out of zeale pretending to Christian Religion, loose the glories and rewards of ingenuity and Christian simplicity.

Of the same consideration is mending of Authors, not to their own mind but to ours, that is, to mend them so as to spoile them; forbidding the publication of Books, in which there is nothing impious, or against the publick interest, leaving out clauses in Translations, disgracing mens persons, charging disavowed Doctrins upon men, and the persons of the men with the consequents of their Doctrine, which they deny either to be true or to be consequent, false reporting of Disputations and Conferences, burning Books by the hand of the hang-man,

and all such Arts, which shew that we either distrust God for the maintenance of his truth, or that we distrust the cause, or distrust our selves and our abilities : I will say no more of these, but only concerning the last, I shall transcribe a passage out of *Tacitus* in the life of *Iulius Agricola*, who gives this account of it, *Veniam non petissem nisi incurfaturus tam sæva & infesta virtutibus tempora. Legimus cum Aruleno Rustico Patus Thrasea, Herennio Senecioni Priscus Helvidius laudati essent, capitale fuisse, neque in ipsos modo authores, sed in libros quoque eorum sævitum delegato Triumviris ministerio ut monumenta clarissimorum ingeniorum in comitio ac foro urerentur, scil. illo igne vocem populi Rom. & libertatem Senatus & conscientiam generis humani aboleri arbitrabantur, expulsis insuper sapientie professoribus, atque omni bonâ arte in exilium actâ, ne quid usquam honestum occurreret.* It is but an illiterate Policy to think that such indirect and uningenuous proceedings can amongst wise and free-men disgrace the Authors, and disrepute their Discourses ; And I have seen that the price hath been trebled upon a forbidden or a condemn'd Book, and some men in policy have got a prohibition that their impression might be the more certainly vendible, and the Author himselfe thought considerable.

The best way is to leave tricks and devices, and to fall upon that way which the best Ages
of

of the Church did use : With the strength of Argument, and Allegations of Scripture, and modesty of deportment, and meeknesse, and charity to the persons of men, they converted mis-believers, stopped the mouthes of Adversaries, asserted truth, and discountenanced error ; and those other stratagems and Arts of support and maintenance to Doctrines, were the issues of hereticall braines ; the old Catholicks had nothing to secure themselves but the *in p̄sa* of truth and plaine dealing.

*Fidem minutis dissecant ambagibus :
 ut quisque linguā est nequior.
 Solvunt ligantque quæstionum vincula
 Per syllogismos plectiles.
 Væ captiosis Sycophantarum strophis,
 Væ versipelli astutiæ.
 Nodos tenaces recta rumpit regula
 Infesta discernantibus :
 Idcirco mundi stulta deligit Deus
 ut concidant Sophistica.*

Prudent. apo-
 theos. hym. in
 fidel.

And to my understanding, it is a plain Art and design of the Devill, to make us so in love with our own opinions, as to call them Faith and Religion, that we may be proud in our understanding ; and besides, that by our zeale in our opinions, we grow coole in our piety and practicall duties, he also by this earnest contention

does directly destroy good life, by engagement of Zealots to do any thing rather then be overcome, and loose their beloved propositions: But I would faine know why is not any vicious habit as bad or worse then a false opinion? Why are we so zealous against those we call Hereticks, and yet great friends with drunkards, fornicators, and swearers, and intemperate and idle persons? Is it because we are commanded by the Apostle to reject a Heretick after two admonitions, and not to bid such a one God speed? It is a good reason why we should be zealous against such persons, provided we mistake them not. For those of whom these Apostles speak, are such as deny Christ to be come in the flesh, such as deny an Article of Creed; and in such odious things, it is not safe nor charitable to extend the gravamen and punishment beyond the instances the Apostles make, or their exact parallels. But then also, it would be remembered that the Apostles speak as fiercely against communion with fornicators, and all disorders practically, as against communion with Hereticks, *If any man that is called a brother be a Fornicator, or Covetous, or an Idolater, or a Railer, or a Drunkard, or an Extortioner, with such a one no not to eat:* I am certain that a Drunkard is as contrary to God, and lives as contrary to the Lawes of Christianity, as a Heretick; and I am also sure that I know what drunkenness is, but

I am not sure that such an opinion is Heresy, neither would other men be so sure as they think for if they did consider it aright, and observe the infinite deceptions, and causes of deceptions in wise men, and in most things, and in all doubtfull Questions, and that they did not mistake confidence for certainty.

But indeed, I could not but smile at those jolly Fryers, two *Franciscans* offered themselves to the fire to prove *Savanarola* to be a Heretick, but a certaine *Iacobine* offered himselfe to the fire to prove that *Savanarola* had true Revelations, and was no Heretick; in the meane time *Savanarola* preacht, but made no such confident offer, nor durst he venture at that new kind of fire Ordeal; and put case all four had past through the fire, and dyed in the flames, what would that have proved? Had he been a Heretick or no Heretick, the more or the lesse, for the confidence of these Zealous Ideots? If we mark it, a great many Arguments whereon many Sects rely, are no better probation then this comes to. Confidence is the first; and the second, and the third part of a very great many of their propositions.

But now if men would a little turn the Tables, and be as zealous for a good life, and all the strictest precepts of Christianity (which is a Religion the most holy, the most reasonable, and the most consummate that ever was taught

Comain. 48.
c. 19.

to man) as they are for such propositions in which neither the life, nor the ornament of Christianity is concerned, we should find, that as a consequent of this piety, men would be as careful as they could, to find out all truths, and the sense of all revelations which may concern their duty; and where men were miserable and could not, yet others that liv'd good lives too would also be so charitable, as not to adde affliction to this misery; and both of them are parts of good life, to be compassionate, and to help to beare one anothers burdens, not to destroy the weak, but to entertain him meekly, that's a precept of charity, and to endeavour to find out the whole will of God, that also is a part of the obedience, the choyce and the excellency of Faith, and hee lives not a good life, that does not doe both these.

But men think they have more reason to be zealous against Heresy then against a vice in manners, because Heresy is infectious and dangerous, and the principle of much evill: Indeed if by a Héresy we mean that which is against an Article of Creed, and breaks part of the Covenant made between God and man by the mediation of Jesus Christ, I grant it to be a very grievous crime, a calling Gods veracity into question, and a destruccion also of good life, because upon the Articles of Creed, obedience is built, and it lives or dies, as the effect does by its proper cause;

cause; for Faith is the morall cause of obedience: But then Heresy, that is, such as this, is also a vice, and the person criminall, and so the sin is to be esteem'd in its degrees of malignity, and let men be as zealous against it as they can, and imploy the whole arsenall of the spirituall armour against it, such as this, is worse then adultery or murther, in as much as the soule is more noble then the body, and a false doctrine is of greater dissemination and extent then a single act of violence or impurity. Adultery or murder is a duell, but Heresy (truly and indeed such) is an unlawfull warre, it slayes thousands: The loosing of Faith is like digging down a foundation; all the superstructures of hope, and patience, and charity fall with it: And besides this, Heresy of all crimes is the most inexcusable and of least temptation; for true faith is most commonly kept with the least trouble of any grace in the world; and Heresy of it selfe hath not only no pleasure in it, but is a very punishment; because faith as it opposes hereticall or false opinions, and distinguishes from charity, consists in meare acts of believing, which because they are of true propositions, are naturall and proportionable to the understanding, and more honourable then false. But then concerning those things which men now adayes call Heresy, they cannot be so formidable as they are represented, and if we consider that drunkennesse is
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certainly a damnable sin, and that there are more Drunkards then Hereticks, and that drunkenness is parent of a thousand vices, it may better be said of this vice then of most of those opinions which we call Heresies, it is infectious and dangerous, and the principle of much evill, and therefore as fit an object for a pious zeale to contest against, as is any of those opinions which trouble mens ease or reputation, for that is the greatest of their malignity.

But if we consider that Sects are made and opinions are called Heresies upon interest, and the grounds of emolument, we shall see that a good life would cure much of this mischief. For first, the Church of *Rome* which is the great dictatrix of dogmaticall resolutions, and the declarer of Heresy, and calls Heretick more then all the world besides, hath made that the rule of Heresy, which is the conservatory of interest, and the ends of men. For to recede from the Doctrine of the Church, with them makes Heresy, that is, to disrepute their Authority and not to obey them, not to be their subjects, not to give them the Empire of our conscience, is the great *apostasy* of Heresy.

So that with them, Heresy is to be esteemed clearely by humane ends, not by Divine Rules; that is formall Heresy which does materially disserve them, and it would make a suspicious man a little inquisitive into their par-

particular Doctrins, and when hee finds that Indulgences, and Jubilies, and Purgatories, and Masses, and Offices for the dead, are very profitable; that the Doctrine of primacy, of infallibility, of superiority over Councils, of indirect power in temporals, are great instruments of secular honour; would be apt enough to think that if the Church of *Rome* would learn to lay her honour at the feet of the Crucifix, and despise the world, and preferre *Ierusalem* before *Rome*, and Heaven above the *Lateran*, that these opinions would not have in them any native strength to support them, against the perpetuall assaults of their Adversaries, that speak so much reason and Scripture against them. I have instanced in the Roman Religion, but I wish it may be considered also how farre mens Doctrines in other Sects serve mens temporall ends, so farre that it would not bee unreasonable or unnecessary to attempt to cure some of their distemperatures or misperswasions by the salutary precepts of sanctity and holy life: Sure enough, if it did not more concern their reputation and their lasting interest to be counted true believers rather then good livers, they would rather endeavour to live well, then to bee accounted of a right opinion in things beside the Creed.

I For my own particular I cannot but expect, that God in his Justice should enlarge the bounds of the Turkish Empire, or some other way pu-

nish Christians by reason of their pertinacious disputing about things unnecessary, undeterminable, and unprofitable, and for their hating and persecuting their brethren which should be as dear to them as their own lives, for not consenting to one anothers follies, and senselesse vanities: How many volumnes have been writ about Angels, about immaculate conception, about originall sin, when that all that is solid reason or clear Revelation, in all these three Articles, may be reasonably enough comprized in fourty lines! And in these trifles and impertinencies, men are curiously busie while they neglect those glorious precepts of Christianity and holy life, which are the glories of our Religion, and would enable us to a happy eternity.

My Lord, Thus farre my thoughts have carried me, and then I thought I had reason to goe further, and to examine the proper grounds upon which, these perswasions might rely and stand firme, in case any body should contest against them: For possibly men may be angry at me and my design, for I doe all them great displeasure, who think no, end is then well served, when their interest is disserved, and but that I have writ so untowardly and heavily, that I am not worth a confutation, possibly some or other might be writing against me. But then I must tell them I am prepared of an answer before hand: For I think I have spoken reason in my
Book,

Book, and examined it with all the severity I have, and if after all this I be deceiv'd, this confirms me in my first opinion, and becomes a new Argument to me, that I have spoken reason; for it furnishes me with a new instance, that it is necessary, there should bee a mutuall compliance and Toleration, because even then when a man thinks he hath most reason to bee confident, hee may easily bee deceived.

For I am sure, I have no other design but the prosecution and advantage of truth, and I may truly use the words of *Gregory Nazianzen*, *Non studemus paci in detrimentum vere doctrine, . . . ut facilitatis & mansuetudinis famam colligamus*: But I have writ this because I thought it was necessary and seasonable, and charitable, and agreeable to the great precepts and design of Christianity, consonant to the practise of the Apostles, and of the best Ages of the Church, most agreeable to Scripture and reason, to revelation and the nature of the thing; and it is such a Doctrine, that if there be variety in humane affaires, if the event of things be not settled in a durable consistence, but is changeable, every one of us all may have need of it: I shall only therefore desire that they who will read it may come to the reading it with as much simplicity of purposes and unmixed desires of truth, as I did to the writing it, and that no man trouble himselfe with me or my discourse, that thinks beforehand that his opinion cannot be reasonably altered. If he thinks me to be mistaken before he tries, let

him also think that hee may be mistaken too, and that he who judges before he heares, is mistaken though he gives a right sentence:

Aristoph. in
Pluto.

Ὁν ἡλιόθεν ἢ θεῶν οὐκ ἂν μάταις,

Was good counsell: But at a venture, I shall leave this sentence of *Solomon* to his consideration, *A wise man feareth, and departeth from evill, but a foole rageth and is confident*, τὰυτὰ εἰδέναι ἔτι καὶ δι' ἡμετέρας, is a trick of boyes and bold young fellowes, sayes *Aristotle*; but they who either know themselves, or things, or persons, περὶ πάντων αὐτὸν πρὸς τοὺς, ἢ πρὸς τὰ ἄλλα. Peradventure yea, peradventure no, is very often the wisest determination of a Question: For there are μωροὶ καὶ ἀπαιδευτοὶ ἐπιήκει (as the Apostle notes) foolish and unlearned Questions, and it were better to stop the current of such fopperies by silence, then by disputing them convey them to Posterity. And many things there are of more profit which yet are of no more certainty, and therefore boldnesse of assertion (except it be in matters of Faith and clearest Revelation) is an Argument of the vanity of the man, never of the truth of the proposition; for to such matters the saying of *Xenophanes* in *Varro*, is pertinent and applicable, *Hominis est hoc opinari, Dei scire*; God only knowes them, and we conjecture.

Μάλιστα ἀπὸ τοῦ εἰδέναι καὶ ἡμετέρας.

And although I be as desirous to know what I should, and what I should not, as any of my Brethren the Sons of *Adam*; yet I find that the more I search, the further I am from being satisfied, and make but
few

few discoveries, save of my own ignorance, and therefore I am desirous to follow the example of a very wise Personage, *Iulius Agricola*, of whom *Tacitus* gave this testimony, *Retinuitque (quod est difficillimum) ex scientiâ modum*; or that I may take my precedent from within the pale of the Church, it was the saying of *S. Austin*, *Mallem quidem eorum quæ à me quævissi habere scientiam quam ignorantiam, sed quia id nondum potui, magis eligo cautam ignorantiam confiteri, quam falsam scientiam profiteri*; And these words doe very much expresse my sense. But if there be any man so confident as *Luther* sometimes was, who said that hee could expound all Scripture, or so vaine as *Eckius* who in his *Ckrysopassus* ventur'd upon the highest and most mysterious Question of Predestination, *ut in eâ juveniles possit calores exercere*; such persons as these, or any that is furious in his opinion, will scorn me and my Discourse; but I shall not bee much mov'd at it, only I shall wish that I had as much knowledge as they think me to want, and they as much as they believe themselves to have. In the meane time, Modesty were better for us both, and indeed for all men: For when men indeed are knowing, amongst other things they are able to separate certainties from uncertainties; If they be not knowing, it is pity that their ignorance should bee triumphant, or discompose the publike peace, or private confidence.

And now (my Lord) that I have inscrib'd this Book to your Lordship, although it be a design of
doing.

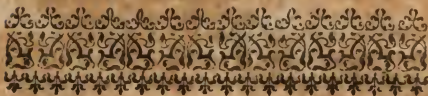
doing honour to my selfe, that I have markt it with so honour'd and beloved a Name, might possibly need as much excuse as it does pardon, but that your Lordship knowes your own; for out of your Mines I have digg'd the Minerall; only I have stamp't it with my own image, as you may perceive by the deformities which are in it. But your great Name in letters will adde so much value to it, as to make it obtaine its pardon amongst all them that know how to value you, and all your relatives and dependants by the proportion of relation. For others I shall be incurious, because the number of them that honour you is the same with them that honour Learning and Piety, and they are the best Theatre and the best judges; amongst which the world must needs take notice of my ambition, to be ascribed by my publike pretence to be what I am in all heartinesse of Devotion, and for all the reason of the world,

My Honour'd Lord,

Your Lordships most faithfull

and most affectionate servant,

J. TAYLOR.



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OF



Θεολογία Ἐκλεκτική.

OF
THE LIBERTY
OF
PROPHESYING.



He infinite variety of Opinions in matters of Religion, as they have troubled Christendome, with interests, factions, and partialities; so have they caused great divisions of the heart, and variety of thoughts and designs amongst pious and prudent men. For they all seeing the inconveniences which the dis-union of persuasions and Opinions have produced directly or accidentally, have thought themselves obliged, to stop this inundation of mischiefs, and have made attempts accordingly. But it hath hapned to most of them as to a mistaken Physitian, who gives excellent physick but mis-applies it, and so misses of his cure; so have these men, their attempts have therefore been ineffectual; for they put their help to a wrong part, or they have endeavoured to cure the symptoms, and have let the disease alone till it seem'd incurable. Some have endeavoured to re-unite these

fractions by propounding ſuch a Guide which they were all bound to follow; hoping that the Unity of a Guide, would have perſwaded unity of mindes; but who this Guide ſhould be at laſt became ſuch a Queſtion, that it was made part of the fire that was to be quenched; ſo farre was it from extinguishing any part of the flame. Others thought of a Rule, and this muſt be the meanes of Union, or nothing could doe it. But ſuppoſing all the World had been agreed of this Rule, yet the interpretation of it was ſo full of variety, that this alſo became part of the diſeaſe, for which the cure was pretended. All men reſolv'd upon this, that though they yet had not hit upon the right, yet ſome way muſt be thought upon to reconcile differences in Opinion; thinking ſo long as this variety ſhould laſt, Chriſt's Kingdome was not advanced, and the work of the Goſpel went on but ſlowly: Few men in the mean time conſidered, that ſo long as men had ſuch variety of principles, ſuch ſeverall conſtitutions, educations, tempers, and diſtempers, hopes, intereſts, and weakneſſes, degrees of light, and degrees of underſtanding, it was impoſſible all ſhould be of one minde. And what is impoſſible to be done, is not neceſſary it ſhould be done: And therefore, although variety of Opinions was impoſſible to be cured (and they who attempted it, did like him who claps his ſhoulder to the ground to ſtop an earth-quake) yet the inconveniences ariſing from it might poſſibly be cured, not by uniting their beliefs, that was to be diſpaired of, but by curing that which cauſ'd theſe miſchiefs, and accidentall inconveniences of their diſagreeings. For although theſe inconveniences which every man ſees and feels were conſequent to this diverſity of perſwaſions, yet it was but accidentally and by chance, in as much as wee ſee that in many things, and they of great concernment, men allow to themſelves and to each other a liberty of diſagreeing, and no hurt neither. And certainly if diverſity of Opinions, were of it ſelfe the cauſe of miſchiefs it would be ſo ever, that is, regularly and univerſally (but that we ſee it is not :) For there are diſputes in Chriſtendome concerning matters of greater concernment then moſt of thoſe Opinions that diſtinguiſh Sects, and make factions; and yet becauſe men are permitted to differ in thoſe great matters, ſuch evils are not conſequent to ſuch

such differences, as are to the uncharitable managing of smaller and more inconsiderable Questions. It is of greater consequence to believe right in the Question of the validity or invalidity of a death-bed repentance, then to believe aright in the Question of Purgatory; and the consequences of the Doctrine of Predestination, are of deeper and more materiall consideration then the products of the believe of the lawfulness or unlawfulness of private Masses; and yet these great concerns where a liberty of Prophefying in these Questions hath been permitted, hath made no distinct Communion, no sects of Christians, and the others have, and so have these too in those places where they have peremptorily been determin'd on either side. Since then if men are quiet and charitable in some dis-agreements, that then and there the inconvenience ceases, if they were so in all others where lawfully they might (and they may in most,) Christendome should be no longer rent in pieces, but would be reintegrated in a new Pentecost, and although the Spirit of God did rest upon us in divided tongues, yet so long as those tongues were of fire not to kindle strife, but to warme our affections, and inflame our charities, we should finde that this variety of Opinions in severall persons would be look't upon as an argument only of diversity of operations, while the Spirit is the same; and that another man believes not so well as I, is onely an argument that I have a better and a clearer illumination than he, that I have a better gift than he, received a speciall grace and favour, and excell him in this, and am perhaps excelled by him in many more. And if we all impartially endeavour to finde a truth, since this endeavour and search only is in our power, that wee shall finde it being *ab extra*, a gift and an assistance extrinsecall, I can see no reason why this pious endeavour to finde out truth shall not be of more force to unite us in the bonds of charity, then his misery in missing it shall be to dis-unite us. So that since a union of perswasion is impossible to be attain'd, if we would attempt the cure by such remedies as are apt to enkindle and encrease charity, I am confident wee might see a blessed peace would bee the reward and crown of such endeavours.

But men are now adays and indeed alwayes have been, since the

the expiration of the firſt bleſſed Ages of Chriſtianity, ſo in love with their own Fancies and Opinions, as to think Faith and all Chriſtendome is concern'd in their ſupport and maintenance, and whoever is not ſo fond and does not dandle them like themſelves, it growes up to a quarrell, which becauſe it is in *materia theologia* is made a quarrell in Religion, and God is entitl'd to it; and then if you are once thought an enemy to God, it is our duty to perſecute you even to death, we doe God good ſervice in it; when if we ſhould examine the matter rightly, the Queſtion is either in *materia non revelata*, or *minus evidenti*, or *non neceſſaria*, either it is not revealed, or not ſo clearly, but that wiſe and honeſt men may be of different minds, or elſe it is not of the foundation of faith, but a remote ſuper-ſtructure, or elſe of meere ſpeculation, or perhaps when all comes to all, it is a falſe Opinion, or a matter of humane intereſt, that we have ſo zealouſly contend'd for; for to one of theſe heads moſt of the Diſputes of Chriſtendome may be reduc'd; ſo that I believe the preſent fractions (or the moſt) are from the ſame cauſe which *St Paul* obſerv'd in the *Corinthian* Schiſme, *when there are diſiſions among you, are ye not carnall?* It is not the differing Opinions that is the cauſe of the preſent ruptures, but want of charity; it is not the variety of underſtandings, but the diſunion of wills and affections; it is not the ſeverall principles, but the ſeverall ends that cauſe our miſeries: our Opinions commence, and are upheld according as our turns are ſerv'd and our intereſts are preſerv'd, and there is no cure for us, but Piety and Charity. A holy life will make our belief holy, if we conſult not humanity and its imperfections in the choyce of our Religion, but ſearch for truth without deſignes, ſave only of acquiring heaven, and then be as carefull to preſerve Charity, as we were to get a point of Faith; I am much perſwaded we ſhould finde out more truths by this meanes; or however (which is the maine of all) we ſhall be ſecured though we miſſe them; and then we are well enough.

For if it be evinc'd that one heaven ſhall hold men of ſeverall Opinions, if the unity of Faith be not deſtroyed by that which men call differing Religions, and if an unity of Charity be the duty of us all even towards perſons that are not perſwaded

ded of every propoſition we believe, then I would ſaine know to what purpoſe are all thoſe ſtirres, and great noyſes in Chriſtendome; thoſe names of faction, the ſeverall Names of Churches not diſtinguiſh'd by the diviſion of Kingdomes, *ut Eccleſia ſequatur Imperium*, which was the Primitive Rule and Canon, but diſtinguiſh'd by Names of Sects and men; theſe are all become inſtruments of hatred, thence come Schiſmes and parting of Communions, and then perſecutions, and then warres and Rebellion, and then the diſſolutions of all Friendſhips and Societies. All theſe miſchiefes proceed not from this, that all men are not of one minde, for that is neither neceſſary nor poſſible, but that every Opinion is made an Article of Faith, every Article is a ground of a quarrell, every quarrell makes a faction, every faction is zealous, and all zeale pretends for God, and whatſoever is for God cannot be too much; we by this time are come to that paſſe, we think we love not God except we hate our Brother, and we have not the vertue of Religion; unleſſe we perſecute all Religions but our own; for luke-warmneſſe is ſo odious to God and Man, that we proceeding furiously upon theſe miſtakes, by ſuppoſing we preſerve the body, we deſtroy the ſoule of Religion, or by being zealous for faith, or which is all one, for that which we miſtake for faith, we are cold in charity, and ſo looſe the reward of both.

All theſe errors and miſchiefes muſt be diſcovered and cured, and that's the purpoſe of this Diſcourſe.

SECTION I.

Of the nature of Faith, and that its duty is compleated in believing the Articles of the Apoſtles Creed.

FiRſt then it is of great concernment to know the nature and Integrity of faith: For there begins our firſt and great miſtake; for Faith although it be of great excellency, yet when it is taken for a habit intellectuall, it hath ſo little roome and ſo narrow a capacity, that it cannot lodge thouſands of thoſe Opinions which pretend to be of her Family.

Number 1.

Numb. 2.

For although it be necessary for us to believe whatsoever we know to be revealed of God, and so every man does, that believes there is a God: yet it is not necessary, concerning many things, to know that God hath revealed them, that is, we may be ignorant of, or doubt concerning the propositions, and indifferently maintaine either part, when the Question is not concerning Gods veracity, but whether God hath said so or no: That which is of the foundation of Faith, that only is necessary; and the knowing or not knowing of that, the believing or disbelieving it, is that only which in *generis credendorum*, is in immediate and necessary order to salvation or damnation.

Numb. 3.

Now all the reason and demonstration of the world convinces us, that this foundation of Faith, or the great adequate object of the Faith that saves us, is that great mysteriousness of Christianity which Christ taught with so much diligence, for the credibility of which he wrought so many miracles; for the testimony of which the Apostles endured persecutions; that which was a folly to the Gentiles, and a scandal to the Jews, this is that which is the object of a Christians Faith: All other things are implicirely in the believe of the Articles of Gods veracity, and are not necessary in respect of the Constitution of faith to be drawn out, but may there lie in the bowels of the great Articles without danger to any thing or any person, unlesse some other accident or circumstance makes them necessary: Now the great object which I speak of, is *Jesus Christ crucified*; *Constat enim apud vos nihil scire prater Jesum Christum & hunc crucifixum*; so said S. Paul to the Church of *Corinth*: This is the Article upon the Confession of which Christ built his Church, *viz.* only upon S. *Peters Creed*, which was no more but this simple enunciation, *We believe and are sure that thou art Christ, the Sonne of the living God*: And to this salvation particularly is promised, as in the case of *Martha's Creed*, *Ioh. 11. 27.* To this the Scripture gives the greatest Testimony, and to all them that confesse it; *For every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And who ever confesseth that Jesus Christ is the Sonne of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God*: The believing this Article is the end of writing

Mt. 16. 19.

1 Ioh. 4. 2, 15.

writing the ſoure Gospels : *For all theſe things are written, that ye might believe, that Jeſus is the Chriſt the Sonne of God,* and then that this is ſufficient followes, and that believing, viz. this Article (for this was only inſtanced in) *ye might have life through his name* : This is that great Article which in genere credendorum, is ſufficient diſpoſition to prepare a Catechumen to Baptiſm, as appears in the caſe of the *Ethiopian Eunuch*, whoſe Creed was only this, *I believe that Jeſus Chriſt is the Sonne of God*, and upon this Confeſſion (ſaith the ſtory) they both went into the water, and the *Ethiop* was waſhed and became as white as ſnow.

In theſe particular inſtances, there is no variety of Articles, ſave only that in the annexes of the ſeverall expreſſions, ſuch things are expreſſed, as beſides that Chriſt is come, they tell from whence, and to what purpoſe : And whatſoever is expreſſed, or is to theſe purpoſes implied, is made articulate and explicate, in the ſhort and admirable myſterious Creed of *S. Paul, Rom. 10. 8. This is the word of faith which we preach, that if thou ſhalt confeſſe with thy mouth the Lord Jeſus, and ſhalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raiſed him from the dead, thou ſhalt be ſaved* : This is the great and intire complexion of a Chriſtian's faith, and ſince ſalvation is promiſed to the beleeve of this Creed, either a ſnare is laid for us, with a purpoſe to deceive us, or elſe nothing is of prime and original neceſſity to be believed, but this, *Jeſus Chriſt our Redeemer*; and all that which is the neceſſary parts, meanes, or maine actions of working this redemption for us, and the honour for him is in the bowels and fold of the great Article, and claims an explicite belief by the ſame reaſon that binds us to the belief of its firſt complexion, without which neither the thing could be aſſed, nor the propoſition underſtood.

For the act of believing propoſitions, is not for it ſelfe, but in order to certaine ends; as Sermons are to good life and obedience; for (excepting that it acknowledges Gods veracity, and ſo is a direct act of Religion) believing a revealed propoſition, hath no excellency in it ſelfe, but in order to that end for which we are inſtructed in ſuch revelations. Now Gods great purpoſe being to bring us to him by Jeſus Chriſt,

Chriſt.

Chriſt is our medium to God, obedience is the medium to Chriſt, and Faith the medium to obedience, and therefore is to have its eſtimate in proportion to its proper end, and thoſe things are neceſſary, which neceſſarily promote the end, without which obedience cannot be encouraged or prudently enjoy'd: So that thoſe Articles are neceſſary, that is, thoſe are fundamentall points, upon which we build our obedience; and as the influence of the Article is to the perſuaſion or engagement of obedience, ſo they have their degrees of neceſſity. Now all that Chriſt, when he preach'd, taught us to believe, and all that the Apoſtles in their Sermons propound, all aime at this, that wee ſhould acknowledge Chriſt for our Law-Giver and our Saviour; ſo that nothing can be neceſſary by a prime neceſſity to be believ'd explicite, but ſuch things which are therefore parts of the great Article, becauſe they either encourage our ſervices, or oblige them, ſuch as declare Chriſts greatneſſe in himſelfe, or his goodneſſe to us: So that although we muſt neither deny nor doubt of any thing, which we know our great Maſter hath taught us: yet ſalvation is in ſpeciall and by-name annexed to the beleeve of thoſe Articles only, which have in them the indearements of our ſervices, or the ſupport of our confidence, or the ſatisfaction of our hopes, ſuch as are; Jeſus Chriſt the Sonne of the living God, the Crucifixion and Reſurrection of Jeſus, forgivenesse of ſinnes by his blood, Reſurrection of the dead, and life eternall, becauſe theſe propoſitions qualifie Chriſt for our Saviour and our Law-Giver, the one to engage our ſervices, the other to endear them; for ſo much is neceſſary as will make us to be his ſervants, and his Diſciples; and what can be required more? This only. Salvation is promiſ'd to the explicite belief of thoſe Articles, and therefore thoſe only are neceſſary, and thoſe are ſufficient; but thus, to us in the formality of Chriſtians, which is a formality ſuper-added to a former capacity, we before we are Chriſtians are reaſonable creatures, and capable of a bleſſed eternity, and there is a Creed which is the Gentiles Creed which is ſo ſuppoſed in the Chriſtian Creed, as it is ſuppoſed in a Chriſtian to be a man, and that is, *oportet accedentem ad Deum credere Deum eſſe, & eſſe remuneratorem quatenus eripit.*

If any man will urge farther, that whatſoever is deducible from theſe Articles by neceſſary conſequence, is neceſſary to be believed explicite: I Answer. It is true, if he ſees the deduction and coherence of the parts; but it is not certain that every man ſhall be able to deduce whatſoever is either immediately, or certainly deducible from theſe premiſes; and then ſince ſalvation is promiſ'd to the explicite belief of theſe, I ſee not how any man can juſtifie the making the way to heaven narrower then Jeſus Chriſt hath made it, it being already ſo narrow, that there are few that finde it.

In the purſuance of this great truth, the Apoſtles or the holy men, their Contemporaries and Diſciples, compoſed a Creed, to be a Rule of Faith to all Chriſtians, as appears in *Irenæus*, *Ter-tullian*, *S. Cyprian*, *S. Auſtin*, *Ruffinus*, and divers others; which Creed unleſſe it had contain'd all the intire object of Faith, and the foundation of Religion, it cannot be imagin'd to what purpoſe it ſhould ſerve; and that it was ſo eſteem'd by the whole Church of God in all Ages, appears in this, that ſince Faith is a neceſſary pre-diſpoſition to Baptiſm in all perſons capable of the uſe of reaſon, all *Catechumens* in the Latine Church comming to Baptiſm, were interrogated concerning their Faith, and gave ſatisfaction in the recitation of this Creed. And in the Eaſt they profeſſed exactly the ſame Faith, ſomething differing in words, but of the ſame matter, reaſon, deſign, and conſequence; and ſo they did at *Hieruſalem*, ſo at *Aqui-leia*: This was that *ἡν περ ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἐν λόγῳ ἡμεῖς ἐκδομένη καὶ ἀποδομένη ἐκκλησία καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐν τῷ πνεύματι καὶ ἐν λόγῳ ἐκδομένη καὶ ἀποδομένη ἐκκλησία*. Theſe Articles were *τὰς αὐτὰς ἀρχαίαις ἀποστόλοις καὶ τοῖς μετ' αὐτῶν διαβιβάντων ἐν ταῖς ἀρχαῖς τοῦ ἐκκλησιαστικοῦ διδασκαλίας*. *L. 5. Cod. de S. Trinit & fid. Cath. Cum reliis*. Now ſince the Apoſtles and Apoſtolicall men and Churches in theſe their Symbols, did recite particular Articles to a conſiderable number, and were ſo minute in their recitation, as to deſcend to circumſtances, it is more then probable that they omitted nothing of neceſſity; and that theſe Articles are not generall principles, in the boſome of which many more Articles equally neceſſary to be believed explicite and more particular, are inſolded; but that it is as minute an explication of thoſe *prima credibilia*

Numb. 7.

a Apol. contr. G. n. c. 47. de veland. virg. c. 1.

b In expoſit. Symbol.

c Serm. 5. de tempore, cap. 2.

d In Symbol. apud Cyprian.

e Omnes orthodoxi Patres affirmant Symbolum ab ipsis Apostolis conditum, *Sext. Senenſis, lib. 2. bibl. 5. vide Genebr. l. 3. de Trin.*

Numb. 8.

I before reckoned, as is neceſſary to ſalvation.

And therefore *Tertullian* calls the Creed *regulam fidei*, quâ ſalvâ & formâ ejus manente in ſuo ordine, poſſit in *Scriptura* tractari & inquiri ſi quid videtur vel ambiguitate pendere vel obſcuritate obumbrari. *Cordis ſignaculum* & noſtræ militiæ Sacramentum, S. *Ambroſe* calls it, lib. 3. de velandis virgin. Comprehenſio fidei noſtra atq; perfectio, by S. *Auſtin*, Serm. 114. *Confefſio*, *expoſitio*, *regula fidei*, generally by the Ancients: The profeſſion of this Creed, was the expoſition of that ſaying of S. *Peter*, ευαγέλιον ἀγαθὸν ἐκπύημα τοῦ Θεοῦ, The answer of a good conſcience towards God. For of the recitation and profeſſion of this Creed in Baptiſm, it is that *Tertullian* de reſur. carnis ſayes, *Anima non lotionē, ſed reſponſione ſancitur*. And of this was the prayer of *Hilary*, lib. 12. de *Trinit.* *Conſerva hanc conſcientia mea vocem ut quod in regenerationis mea Symbolo baptizatus in Patre, Filio, Spir. S. profeſſus ſum ſemper obtineam*. And according to the Rule and Reaſon of this Diſcourſe (that it may appear that the Creed hath in it all Articles primò & per ſe, primely and univerſally neceſſary) the Creed is juſt ſuch an explication of that Faith which the Apoſtles preached, viz. the Creed which S. *Paul* recites, as containes in it all thoſe things which entitle Chriſt to us in the capacities of our Law-Giver and our Saviour, ſuch as enable him to the great work of redemption, according to the predictions concerning him, and ſuch as engage and encourage our ſervices. For, taking out the Article of Chriſts deſcent into Hell (which was not in the old Creed, as appears in ſome of the Copies I before referd to, in *Tertullian*, *Ruffinus*, and *Irenæus*; and indeed was omitted in all the Confefſions of the Eaſtern Churches, in the Church of *Rome*, and in the *Nicene* Creed, which by adoption came to be the Creed of the Catholike Church) all other Articles are ſuch as directly conſtitute the parts and work of our redemption, ſuch as clearly derive the honour to Chriſt, and enable him with the capacities of our Saviour and Lord. The reſt engage our ſervices by propoſition of ſuch Articles which are rather promiſes then propoſitions; and the whole Creed, take it in any of the old Forms, is but an Analyſis of that which S. *Paul* calls the word of ſalvation, whereby we ſhall be ſaved, viz. that we confeſſe

confeſſe Jeſus to be Lord, and that God raiſed him from the dead: by the firſt whereof he became our Law-Giver and our Guardian; by the ſecond he was our Saviour: the other things are but parts and maine actions of thoſe two. Now what reaſon there is in the world that can inwrap any thing elſe within the foundation, that is, in the whole body of Articles ſimply and inſeparably neceſſary, or in the prime originall neceſſity of Faith, I cannot poſſibly imagine. Theſe doe the work, and therefore nothing can upon the true grounds of reaſon enlarge the neceſſity to the incloſure of other Articles.

Now if more were neceſſary than the Articles of the Creed, I demand why was it made the * Characteriſtick note of a Chriſtian from a Heretick, or a Jew, or an Infidell? or to what purpoſe was it compoſed? Or if this was intended as ſufficient, did the Apoſtles or thoſe Churches which they ſounded, know any thing elſe to be neceſſary? If they did not, then either nothing more is neceſſary (I ſpeak of matters of meer beliefe) or they did not know all the will of the Lord, and ſo were unfit Diſpenſers of the myſteries of the Kingdom; or if they did know more was neceſſary, and yet would not inſert it, they did an act of publike notice, and conſign'd it to all Ages of the Church to no purpoſe, unleſſe to beguile credulous people by making them believe their faith was ſufficient, having tryed it by that touch-ſtone Apoſtolicall, when there was no ſuch matter.

But if this was ſufficient to bring men to heaven then, why not now? If the Apoſtles admitted all to their Communion that believed this Creed, why ſhall wee exclude any that preſerve the ſame intire? why is not our faith of theſe Articles of as much efficacy for bringing us to heaven, as it was in the Churches Apoſtolicall? who had guides more infallible that might without error have taught them ſuperſtructures enough, if they had been neceſſary: and ſo they did; But that they did not inſert them into the Creed, when they might have done it with as much certainty, as theſe Articles, makes it clear to my underſtanding, that other things were not neceſſary, but theſe were; that whatever profit and advantages might come from other Articles, yet theſe were ſufficient, and however certain

Numb. 9.

* Vide Iſidor.
de Eccl. Offic.
lib. 1. cap. 10.
Suidan. Tur-
neb. lib. 2.
c. 30. adverſ.
Venant. For. in
Exeg. Symb.
Feuardent. in
Iren. lib. 1. c. 2.

Numb. 10.

persons might accidentally be obliged to believe much more, yet this was the one and onely foundation of Faith upon which all persons were to build their hopes of heaven; this was therefore necessary to be taught to all, because of necessity to be believ'd by all: So that although other persons might commit a delinquency *in genere morum*, if they did not know or did not believe much more, because they were oblig'd to further disquisitions in order to other ends, yet none of these who held the Creed intire, could perish for want of necessary faith, though possibly he might for supine negligence or affected ignorance, or some other fault which had influence upon his opinions, and his understanding, he having a new supervening obligation *ex accidente* to know and believe more.

Numb. II.

Neither are we oblig'd to make these Articles more particular and minute then the Creed. For since the Apostles and indeed our blessed Lord himselfe promised heaven to them who believ'd him to be the Christ that was to come into the world, and that he who believes in him, should be partaker of the resurrection and life eternall, he will be as good as his word: yet because this Article was very generall, and a complexion rather then a single proposition; the Apostles and others our Fathers in Christ did make it more explicite, and though they have said no more then what lay entire and ready form'd in the bosome of the great Article, yet they made their extracts, to great purpose, and absolute sufficiency, and therefore there needs no more deductions or remoter consequences from the first great Article, than the Creed of the Apostles. For although whatsoever is certainly deduced from any of these Articles made already so explicite, is as certainly true, and as much to be believed as the Article it selfe, because *ex veris possunt nil nisi vera sequi*, yet because it is not certain that our deductions from them are certain, and what one calls evident, is so obscure to another, that he believes it false; it is the best and only safe course to rest in that explication the Apostles have made, because if any of these Apostolicall deductions were not demonstrable evidently to follow from that great Article to which salvation is promised, yet the authority of them who compil'd the Symbol, the plaine description of the Articles from the words

words of Scriptures, the evidence of reason demonſtrating theſe to be the whole foundation, are ſufficient upon great grounds of reason to aſcertaine us; but if we goe farther, beſides the eaſineſſe of being deceived, we relying upon our own diſcourſes, (which though they may be true and then binde us to follow them, but yet no more then when they only ſeem trueſt,) yet they cannot make the thing certaine to another, much leſſe neceſſary in it ſelfe. And ſince God would not binde us upon paine of ſinne and puniſhment, to make deductions our ſelves, much leſſe would he binde us to follow another man's Logick as an Article of our Faith; I ſay much leſſe another mans; for our own integrity (for we will certainly be true to our ſelves, and doe our own buſineſſe heartily) is as fit and proper to be employed as another mans ability. He cannot ſecure me that his ability is abſolute and the greateſt, but I can be more certaine that my own purpoſes and fidelity to my ſelfe is ſuch. And ſince it is neceſſary to reſt ſomewhere, leſt we ſhould run to an infinity, it is beſt to reſt there where the Apoſtles and the Churches Apoſtolicall reſted; when not only they who are able to judge, but others who are not, are equally aſcertain'd of the certainty and of the ſufficiency of that explication.

This I ſay, not that I believe it unlawfull or unſafe for the Church or any of the *Antiquities religionis*, or any wiſe man to extend his own Creed to any thing may certainly follow from any one of the Articles; but I ſay, that no ſuch deduction is fit to be preſt on others as an Article of Faith; and that every deduction which is ſo made, unleſſe it be ſuch a thing as is at firſt evident to all, is but ſufficient to make a humane Faith, nor can it amount to a divine, much leſſe can be obligatory to binde a perſon of a differing perſuaſion to ſubſcribe under paine of looſing his Faith, or being a Heretick. For it is a demonſtration, that nothing can be neceſſary to be believed under paine of damnation, but ſuch propoſitions of which it is certaine that God hath ſpoken and taught them to us, and of which it is certaine that this is their ſenſe and purpoſe: For if the ſenſe be uncertain, we can no more be obliged to believe it in a certain ſenſe, then we are to believe it at all, if it were not certaine that God delivered it. But if it be onely certaine that

Numb. 12.

God ſpake it, and not certaine to what ſenſe, our Faith of it is to be as indeterminate as its ſenſe, and it can be no other in the nature of the thing, nor is it conſonant to Gods juſtice to believe of him that he can or will require more. And this is of the nature of thoſe propoſitions which *Ariſtotele* calls *θινες*, to which without any further probation, all wiſe men will give aſſent at its firſt publication. And therefore deductions inevident, from the evident and plain letter of Faith, are as great reſceſſions from the obligation, as they are from the ſimplicity, and certainty of the Article. And this I alſo affirm, although the Church of any one denomination, or repreſented in a Councell, ſhall make the deduction or declaration. For unleſſe Chriſt had promiſed his Spirit to proteſt every particular Church from all errors leſſe materiall, unleſſe he had promiſed an absolute univerſall infallibility *etiam in minutioribus*, unleſſe ſuper-ſtructures be of the ſame neceſſity with the foundation, and that Gods Spirit doth not only preſerve his Church in the being of a Church, but in a certainty of not ſaying any thing that is leſſe certain; and that whether they will or no too; we may be bound to peace and obedience, to ſilence, and to charity, but have not a new Article of Faith made; and a new propoſition though conſequent (as 'tis ſaid) from an Article of Faith becomes not therefore a part of the Faith, nor of absolute neceſſity, *Quid unquam aliud Eccleſia Conciliorum decretis eviſa eſt, niſi ut quod antea ſimpliciter credebatur, hoc idem poſtea diligentius crederetur*, ſaid *Vincentius Lirinensis*; whatſoever was of neceſſary belief before is ſo ſtill, and hath a new degree added by reaſon of a new light or a clear explication; but no propoſitions can be adopted into the foundation. The Church hath power to intend our Faith, but not to extend it; to make our belief more evident, but not more large and comprehensive. For Chriſt and his Apoſtles concealed nothing that was neceſſary to the integrity of Chriſtian Faith, or ſalvation of our ſouls; Chriſt declared all the will of his Father, and the Apoſtles were Stewards and Diſpenſers of the ſame Myſteries, and were faithfull in all the houſe, and therefore conceald nothing, but taught the whole Doctrin of Chriſt; ſo they ſaid themſelves. And indeed if they did not teach all the Doctrin of Faith, an Angel or a man might have taught us other things

Contra hæref.
cap. 32.

then

then what they taught, without deſerving an Anathema, but not without deſerving a bleſſing for making up that Faith intire which the Apoſtles left imperfect. Now if they taught all the whole body of Faith, either the Church in the following Ages loſt part of the Faith (and then where was their infallibility, and the effect of thoſe glorious promiſes to which ſhe pretends and hath certain Title? for ſhe may as well introduce a falſhood as looſe a truth, it being as much promiſed to her that the Holy Ghoſt ſhall lead her into all truth, as that ſhe ſhall be preſerved from all errors as appears, *Ioh. 16. 13.*) Or if ſhe retained all the Faith which Chriſt and his Apoſtles conſign'd and taught, then no Age can by declaring any point, make that be an Article of Faith which was not ſo in all Ages of Chriſtianity before ſuch declaration. And indeed if the * Church by declaring an Article can make that to be neceſſary, which before was not neceſſary, I doe not ſee how it can ſtand with the charity of the Church ſo to doe (eſpecially after ſo long experience ſhee hath had that all men will not believe every ſuch deciſion or explication) for by ſo doing ſhe makes the narrow way to heaven narrower, and chalks out one path more to the Devill then he had before, and yet the way was broad enough when it was at the narroweſt. For before, differing perſons might be ſaved in diverſity of perſwaſions, and now after this declaration if they cannot, there is no other alteration made, but that ſome ſhall be damned who before even in the ſame diſpoſitions and beliefe ſhould have been beatified perſons. For therefore it is well for the Fathers of the Primitive Church that their errors were not diſcovered, for if they had been conteſted (for that would have been cald diſcovery enough) *vel errores emendaſſent, vel ab Eccleſiâ ejeſti fuiſſent.* But it is better as it was, they went to heaven by that good fortune, whereas otherwiſe they might have gone to the Devill. And yet there were ſome errors, particularly that of *S. Cyprian* that was diſcovered, and he went to heaven, 'tis thought; poſſibly they might ſo too for all this pretence. But ſuppoſe it true, yet whether that declaration of an Article of which with ſafety we either might have doubted or beene ignorant, does more good, then the damning of thoſe many ſoules occaſionally, but yet certainly and knowingly

* Vide Jacob Almain. in 3. Sent. d. 25. Q. Vnic. Dub. 3. Patet ergo, quod nulla veritas eſt Catholica ex approbatione, Eccleſiæ vel Papæ, Gabr. Biel. in 3. S. ut. Diſt. 25 q. Un. c. art. 3. Dub. 3. ad finem.

Bellar. de laicis l. 3. c. 20. §. ad primam co. ſ. ſententiam.

knowingly does hurt, I leave it to all wiſe and good men to determine. And yet beſides this, it cannot enter into my thoughts, that it can poſſibly conſiſt with Gods goodneſſe, to put it into the power of man ſo palpably and openly to alter the paths and in-lets to heaven, and to ſtreighten his mercies, unleſſe he had furniſhed theſe men with an infallible judgement and an infallible prudence, and a never failing charity, that they ſhould never do it but with great neceſſity, and with great truth, and without ends and humane deſignes, of which I think no Arguments can make us certaine, what the Primitive Church hath done in this caſe: I ſhall afterwards conſider and give an account of it, but for the preſent, there is no inſecurity in ending there where the Apoſtles ended, in building where they built, in reſting where they left us, unleſſe the ſame infallibility which they had, had ſtill continued, which I think I ſhall hereafter make evident it did not: And therefore thoſe extensions of Creed which were made in the firſt Ages of the Church, although for the matter they were moſt true; yet becauſe it was not certain that they ſhould be ſo, and they might have been otherwiſe, therefore they could not be in the ſame order of Faith, nor in the ſame degrees of neceſſity to be believ'd with the Articles Apoſtolicall; and therefore whether they did well or no in laying the ſame weight upon them, or whether they did lay the ſame weight or no, we will afterwards conſider.

Numb. 13.

But to return. I conſider that a foundation of Faith cannot alter, unleſſe a new building be to be made; the foundation is the ſame ſtill; and this foundation is no other but that which Chriſt and his Apoſtles laid, which Doctrines are like himſelfe, yeſterday and to day, and the ſame for ever: So that the Articles of neceſſary beliefe to all (which are the only foundation) they cannot be ſeverall in ſeverall Ages, and to ſeverall perſons. Nay, the ſentence & declaration of the Church, cannot lay this foundation, or make any thing of the foundation, becauſe the Church cannot lay her own foundation; we muſt ſuppoſe her to be a building, and that ſhe relies upon the foundation, which is therefore ſuppoſed to be laid before, becauſe ſhe is built upon it, or (to make it more explicate) becauſe a cloud may ariſe from the Allegory of building and foundation, it is plainly thus; The Church being

being a company of men obliged to the duties of Faith and obedience, the duty and obligation being of the faculties of will and understanding to adhere to ſuch an object, muſt pre-ſuppoſe the object made ready for them; for as the object is before the act in order of nature, and therefore not to be produc'd or encreaſed by the faculty (which is receptive, cannot be active upon its proper object :) So the object of the Churches Faith is in order of nature before the Church, or before the act and habite of Faith, and therefore cannot be enlarged by the Church, any more then the act of the viſive faculty can adde viſibility to the object. So that if we have found out what foundation Chriſt and his Apoſtles did lay, that is what body and ſyſteme of Articles ſimply neceſſary they taught and requir'd of us to believe, we need not, we cannot goe any further for foundation, we cannot enlarge that ſyſteme or collection. Now then, although all that they ſaid is true, and nothing of it to be doubted or diſ-believed, yet as all that they ſaid, is neither written nor delivered (becauſe all was not neceſſary) ſo we know that of thoſe things which are written, ſome things are as farre off from the foundation as thoſe things which were omitted, and therefore although now accidentally they muſt be beliv'd by all that know them, yet it is not neceſſary all ſhould know them; and that all ſhould know them in the ſame ſenſe and interpretation, is neither probable nor obligatory; but therefore ſince theſe things are to be diſtinguiſhed by ſome differences of neceſſary and not neceſſary, whether or no is not the declaration of Chriſts and his Apoſtles aſſixing ſalvation to the believe of ſome great comprehensive Articles, and the act of the Apoſtles rendring them as explicite as they thought convenient, and conſigning that Creed made ſo explicite, as a teſſera of a Chriſtian, as a comprehension of the Articles of his believe, as a ſufficient diſpoſition and an expreſſe of the Faith of a *Catechumen* in order to Baptiſm: whether or no I ſay, all this be not ſufficient probation that theſe only are of abſolute neceſſity, that this is ſufficient for meer believe in order to heaven, and that therefore whoſoever believes theſe Articles heartily and explicite, *Quis enim est autem, as S. John's expreſſion is, God dwelleth in him, I leave it to be*

Lib de veland.
Virg.

conſider'd and judg'd of from the premiſes : Only this, if the old Doctors had been made Judges in theſe Queſtions, they would have paſſed their affirmative; for to inſtance in one for all, of this it was ſaid by *Tertullian*, *Regula quidem fidei una omnino eſt ſola immobilis & irreformabilis &c.* *Hâc lege fidei manente cetera jam diſciplina & converſationis admittunt novitatem correktionis, operante ſcil. & proficiente uſq; in finem gratia Dei.* This Symbol is the one ſufficient immoveable unalterable and unchangeable rule of Faith, that admits no increment or decrement; but if the integrity and unity of this be preſerv'd, in all other things men may take a liberty of enlarging their knowledges and propheſyings, according as they are aſſiſted by the grace of God.

SECT. II.

Of Heresy and the nature of it, and that it is to be accounted according to the ſtrict capacity of Chriſtian Faith, and not in Opinions ſpeculative, nor ever to pious perſons.

Numb. 1.

AND thus I have repreſented a ſhort draught of the Object of Faith, and its foundation; the next conſideration in order to our maine deſign, is to conſider what was and what ought to be the judgement of the Apoſtles concerning Heresy: For although there are more kinds of vices, than there are of virtues; yet the number of them is to be taken by accounting the tranſgreſſions of their virtues, and by the limits of Faith; we may alſo reckon the Analogy and proportions of Heresy, that as we have ſeen who was called faithfull by the Apoſtolicall men, wee may alſo perceive who were liſted by them in the Catalogue of Hereticks, that we in our judgements may proceed accordingly.

Numb. 2.

And firſt the word Heresy is uſed in Scripture indifferently, in a good ſenſe for a Sect or Diviſion of Opinion, and men following it, or ſometimes in a bad ſenſe, for a falſe Opinion ſignally condemned; but theſe kinde of people were then call

Anti-

Anti-chriſts and falſe Prophets more frequently then Hereticks, and then there were many of them in the world. But it is obſerveable that no Hereties are noted *ſignanter* in Scripture, but ſuch as are great errors practically in *materiâ pietatis*, ſuch whoſe doctrines taught impiety, or ſuch who denyed the coming of Chriſt directly or by conſequence, not remote or wiredrawn, but prime and immediate : And therefore in the Code de *S. Trinitate & fide Catholica*, heresy is called *δογμα δεινόν, καὶ ἀβύμνον & διδασκαλία*, a wicked Opinion and an ungodly doctrine.

The firſt falſe doctrine we finde condemned by the Apoſtles was the opinion of *Simon Magus*, who thought the Holy Ghoſt was to be bought with money; he thought very diſhonourably to the bleſſed Spirit; but yet his followers are rather noted of a vice, neither reſting in the underſtanding, nor derived from it, but wholly practically; 'Tis ſimony, not heresy, though in *Simon* it was a falſe opinion proceeding from a low account of God, and promoted by his own ends of pride and covetouſneſſe : The great heresy that troubled them was the doctrine of the neceſſity of keeping the Law of *Moses*, the neceſſity of Circumciſion; againſt which doctrine they were therefore zealous, becauſe it was a direct overthrow to the very end and excellency of Chriſts coming. And this was an opinion moſt pertinaciouſly and obſtinately maintain'd by the Jewes, and had made a Sect among the *Galathians*, and this was indeed wholly in opinion; and againſt it the Apoſtles oppoſed two Articles of the Creed, which ſerv'd at ſeverall times according as the Jewes chang'd their opinion, and left ſome degrees of their error, *I believe in Jeſus Chriſt, and I believe the holy Catholike Church*; For they therefore preſſ'd the neceſſity of *Moses* Law, becauſe they were unwilling to forgoe the glorious appellative of being Gods own peculiar people; and that ſalvation was of the Jewes, and that the reſt of the world were capable of that grace, no otherwiſe but by adoption into their Religion, and becomming Proſelytes; But this was ſo ill a doctrine, as that it overthrowed the great benefits of Chriſts coming; for if they were circumciſ'd, Chriſt profited them nothing, meaning this, that Chriſt will not be a Saviour to them who doe not acknowledge him for their Law-Giver; and they neither confeſſe him their Law-Giver nor

Numb. 3.

their Saviour, that look to be juſtified by the Law of *Mofes*, and obſervation of legall rites; ſo that this doctrine was a direct enemy to the foundation, and therefore the Apoſtles were ſo zealous againſt it. Now then that other opinion, which the Apoſtles met at *Jeruſalem* to reſolve, was but a piece of that opinion; for the Jewes and Proſelytes were drawn off from their lees and ſediment, by degrees, ſtep by ſtep. At firſt, they would not endure any ſhould be ſaved but themſelves, and their Proſelytes. Being wrought off from this height by Miracles, and preaching of the Apoſtles, they admitted the Gentiles to a poſſibility of ſalvation, but yet ſo as to hope for it by *Mofes* Law. From which foolery, when they were with much adoe diſſwaded, and told that ſalvation was by Faith in Chriſt, not by works of the Law, yet they reſolv'd to plow with an Oxe and an Aſſe ſtill, and joyne *Mofes* with Chriſt; not as ſhadow and ſubſtance, but in an equall confederation, Chriſt ſhould ſave the Gentiles if he was help'd by *Mofes* but alone Chriſtianity could not doe it. Againſt this the Apoſtles aſſembled at *Jeruſalem*, and made a deciſion of the Queſtion, tying ſome of the Gentiles (ſuch only who were blended by the Jewes in *communi patria*) to obſervation of ſuch Rites which the Jewes had derived by tradition from *Noah*, intending by this to ſatiſſie the Jewes as farre as might be with a reaſonable compliance and condeſcenſion; the other Gentiles who were unmixed, in the meane while, remaining free as appears in the liberty *S. Paul* gave the Church of *Corinth* of eating Idoll Sacrifices (expreſſly againſt the Decree at *Jeruſalem*) ſo it were without ſcandall. And yet for all this care and curious diſcretion, a little of the leaven ſtill remain'd: All this they thought did ſo concern the Gentiles, that it was totally impertinent to the Jewes; ſtill they had a diſtinction to ſatiſſie the letter of the Apoſtles Decree, and yet to perſiſt in their old opinion; and this ſo continued that ſiſteene Chriſtian Biſhops in ſucceſſion were circumciſed, even untill the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, under *Adrian*, as *Eusebius* reports.

Fiſtly, By the way let me obſerve, that never any matter of Queſtion in the Chriſtian Church was determin'd with greater ſolemnity, or more full authority of the Church then this Queſtion

*Euseb. l. 4.
Eccleſ. hiſt.
c. 5.*

Numb. 4.

ſſion concerning Circumciſion: No leſſe than the whole Colledge of the Apoſtles, and Elders at *Jeruſalem*, and that with a Decree of the higheſt ſanction, *Viſum eſt ſpiritu ſancto & nobis*. Secondly, Either the caſe of the Hebrewes in particular was omitted, and no determination concerning them, whether it were neceſſary or lawfull for them to be circumciſed, or elſe it was involv'd in the Decree, and intended to oblige the Jewes. If it was omitted ſince the Queſtion was *de re neceſſaria* (for *dico vobis*, I Paul ſay unto you, if ye be circumciſed, Chriſt ſhall profit you nothing) it is very remarkable how the Apoſtles to gaine the Jewes, and to comply with their violent prejudice in behalfe of *Mofes Law*, did for a time Tolerate their diſſent *etiam in re aliquā neceſſaria*, which I doubt not but was intended as a precedent for the Church to imitate for ever after: But if it was not omitted, either all the multitude of the Jewes (which S. James then their Biſhop expreſſed by *οὐκαὶ μυρίαδες*; Thou ſeeſt how many myriads of Jewes that believe and yet are zelots for the Law; and Eusebius ſpeaking of Juſtus ſayes, he was one *ex infinita multitudine eorum qui ex circumciſione in Jeſum credebant*.) I ſay all theſe did periſh, and their believing in Chriſt ſerv'd them to no other ends, but in the infinity of their torments to upbraid them with hypocriſie and hereſie; or if they were ſav'd; it is apparent how mercifull God was and pitifull to humane infirmities, that in a point of ſo great concernment did pity their weakneſſe, and pardon their errors, and love their good minde, ſince their prejudice was little leſſe than inſuperable, and had faire probabilities, at leaſt, it was ſuch as might abuſe a wiſe and good man (and ſo it did many) they did *bono animo errare*. And if I miſtake not, this conſideration S. Paul urg'd as a reaſon why God forgave him who was a Perſecutor of the Saints, becauſe he did it ignorantly in unbelief, that is, he was not convinc'd in his underſtanding, of the truth of the way which he perſecuted, he in the meane while remaining in that incredulity not out of malice or ill ends, but the miſtakes of humanity and a pious zeale, therefore God had mercy on him: And ſo it was in this great Queſtion of circumciſion, here only was the difference, the invincibility of

20.

Act. 21. 20.

L. 2. 32. Eccleſiaſt. Hiſt.

1. Tim. 1.

S. Paul's error, and the honeſty of his heart cauſed God ſo to pardon him as to bring him to the knowledge of Chriſt, which God therefore did becauſe it was neceſſary, *neceſſitate medi*; no ſalvation was conſiſtent with the actuall remanency of that error; but in the Queſtion of Circumciſion, although they by conſequence did overthrow the end of Chriſt's coming; yet becauſe it was ſuch a conſequence, which they being hindred by a prejudice not impious did not perceive, God tolerated them in their error till time and a continuall dropping of the leſſons and dictates Apoſtolicall did weare it out, and then the doctrine put on it's apparell, and became clothed with neceſſity; they in the meane time ſo kept to the foundation, that is, Jeſus Chriſt crucified and riſen againe, that although this did make a violent concuſſion of it, yet they held faſt with their heart, what they ignorantly deſtroyed with their tongue, (which *Paul* before his converſion did not) that God upon other Titles, then an actuall dereliſion of their error did bring them to ſalvation.

Numb. 5.

And in the deſcent of ſo many years, I finde not any one Anathema paſt by the Apoſtles or their Succeſſors upon any of the Biſhops of *Jeruſalem*, or the Believers of the Circumciſion, and yet it was a point as clearly determined, and of as great neceſſity as any of thoſe Queſtions that at this day vex and crucifie Chriſtendome.

Numb. 6.

Befides this Queſtion, and that of the Reſurreſtion, commend'd in the Church of *Corinth*, and promoted with ſome variety of ſenſe by *Hymeneus* and *Phileus* in *Aſia*, who ſaid that the Reſurreſtion was paſt already, I doe not remember any other hereſy nam'd in Scripture, but ſuch as were errorrs of impiety, *ſeductiones in materiâ practica*, ſuch as was particularly, forbidding to marry, and the hereſy of the *Nicolaitans*, a doctrine that taught the neceſſity of luſt and frequent fornication.

Numb. 7.

But in all the Animadverſions againſt errorrs made by the Apoſtles in the New Teſtament, no pious perſon was condemn'd, no man that did invincibly erre, or *bona mente*; but ſomething that was amiſſe in *genere morum*, was that which the Apoſtles did redargue. And it is very conſiderable, that even they

they of the Circumciſion who in ſo great numbers did heartily believe in Chriſt, and yet moſt violently retain Circumciſion, and without Queſtion went to Heaven in great numbers; yet of the number of theſe very men, they came deeply under cenſure, when to their error they added impiety: So long as it ſtood with charity and without humane ends and ſecular intereſts, ſo long it was either innocent or conniv'd at; but when they grew covetous, and for filthy lucre ſake taught the ſame doctrine which others did in the ſimplicity of their hearts, then they turn'd Hereticks, then they were term'd Seducers; and *Titus* was commanded to look to them, and to ſilence them; *For there are many that are irraſtable and vaine bablers, Seducers of minds, eſpecially they of the Circumciſion, who ſeduce whole houſes, teaching things that they ought not, for filthy lucre ſake.* Theſe indeed were not to be indur'd, but to be ſilenced, by the conviction of ſound doctrine, and to be rebuked ſharply, and avoided.

For hereſy is not an error of the underſtanding, but an error of the will. And this is clearly inſinuated in Scripture, in the ſtile whereof Faith and a good life are made one duty, and vice is called oppoſite to Faith, and hereſy oppoſed to holineſſe and ſanctity. So in *S. Paul*, *For (faith he) the end of the Commandement is charity out of a pure heart, and a good conſcience, and faith unſained; à quibus quòd aberrarunt quidam, from which charity, and purity, and goodneſſe, and ſincerity, becauſe ſome have wandred, deflexerunt ad vaniloquium.* And immediately after, he reckons the oppoſitions to faith and ſound doctrine, and inſtances only in vices that ſtaine the lives of Chriſtians, *the unjuſt, the uncleane, the uncharitable, the lyer, the perjur'd perſon, & ſi quis alius qui ſana doctrina adverſatur;* theſe are the enemies of the true doctrine. And therefore *S. Peter* having given in charge, to adde to our vertue, patience, temperance, charity, and the like; gives this for a reaſon, for if theſe things be in you and abound, yee ſhall be ſmitfull in the knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. So that knowledge and faith is *inter præcepta morum*, is part of a good life: * And *Saint Paul* calls Faith or the forme of ſound words, καὶ ἐνοβλίαν δεσφωλίαν, the doctrine that is according to godlineſſe

Numb. 8.

1 Tim. 1.

* Quid igitur credulitas vel fides? opinor fideliter hominem Chriſto credere, id eſt, fidelem Deo eſſe, hoc eſt, fideliter Dei mandata ſervare. *So Salvian.*

† *ἡ πίστις καὶ ἡ ἀγάπη* ; That's our Religion, or Faith, the whole manner of serving God, *c. de summa Trinit. & fide Cathol.*

lineſſe, 1 Tim. 6. 3. † And *veritati credere*, and in *iniuſtitia ſibi complacere*, are by the ſame Apoſtle oppoſed, and intimate, that piety and faith is all one thing; faith muſt be *ὑγιὲς καὶ ἀκατακτά*, intire and holy too, or it is not right. It was the hereſy of the *Gnoſticks*, that it was no matter how men liv'd, ſo they did but believe aright: Which wicked doctrine *Tatianus* a learned Chriſtian did ſo deteſt, that he fell into a quite contrary, *Non eſt curandum quid quiſque credat, id tantum curandum eſt quod quiſque faciat*; And thence came the Sect *Encratites*: Both theſe hereſies ſprang from the too nice diſtinguiſhing the faith from the piety and good life of a Chriſtian: They are both but one duty. However, they may be diſtinguiſhed, if we ſpeak like Philoſophers; they cannot be diſtinguiſhed, when we ſpeak like Chriſtians. For to believe what God hath commanded, is in order to a good life; and to live well is the produſt of that believing, and as proper emanation from it, as from its proper principle, and as heat is from the fire. And therefore, in Scripture, they are uſed promiſcuouſly in ſenſe, and in expreſſion, as not only being ſubjected in the ſame perſon, but alſo in the ſame faculty; faith is as truly ſeated in the will as in the underſtanding, and a good life as meerly derives from the underſtanding as the will. Both of them are matters of choyce and of election, neither of them an effect naturall and invincible or neceſſary antecedently (*neceſſaria ut fiant, non neceſſario facta.*). And indeed if we remember that *S. Paul* reckons hereſy amongſt the works of the fleſh, and ranks it with all manner of practicall impieties, we ſhall eaſily perceive that if a man mingles not a vice with his opinion, if he be innocent in his life, though deceiv'd in his doctrine, his error is his miſery, not his crime; it makes him an argument of weakneſſe and an object of pity, but not a perſon ſealed up to ruine and reprobation.

Numb. 9.

For as the nature of faith is, ſo is the nature of hereſy, contraries having the ſame proportion and commenſuration. Now faith, if it be taken for an act of the underſtanding meerly, is ſo farre from being that excellent grace that juſtifies us, that it is not good at all, in any kinde but *in genere nature*, and makes the underſtanding better in it ſelfe, or pleaſing to God, juſt as
ſtrength

ſtrength doth the arme, or beauty the face, or health the body; theſe are naturall perfections indeed, and ſo knowledge and a true beliefe is to the underſtanding. But this makes us not at all more acceptable to God; for then the unlearned were certainly in a damnable condition, and all good Scholars ſhould be ſaved (whereas I am afraid too much of the contrary is true.) But unleſſe Faith be made morall by the mixtures of choyce, and charity, it is nothing but a naturall perfection, not a grace or a vertue; and this is demonſtrably prov'd in this, that by the confeſſion of all men of all intereſts and perſwaſions; in matters of meer belief, invincible ignorance is our excuſe if we be deceived, which could not be, but that neither to believe aright is commendable, nor to believe amiſſe is reprovab; but where both one and the other is voluntary and choſen antecedently or conſequently, by prime election or *ex poſt facto*, and ſo comes to be conſider'd in morality, and is part of a good life or a bad life reſpectively. Juſt ſo it is in hereſy, if it be a deſign of ambition, and making of a Sect. (ſo *Erasmus* expounds *S. Paul* ἀίρεσις ἀνθρώπων, *ſectarum* * *anthorum*) if it be for filthy lucre ſake as it was in ſome, that were of the circumciſion, if it be of pride and love of preheminance, as it was in *Diotrephes* ὁ φιλοπορεύων; or out of peviſhneſſe and indocibleneſſe of diſpoſition, or of a contentious ſpirit, that is, that their feet are not ſhod with the preparation of the Goſpel of peace; in all theſe caſes the error is juſt ſo damnable, as is its principle, but therefore damnable not of it ſelfe, but by reaſon of its adherencie. And if any ſhall ſay any otherwiſe, it is to ſay that ſome men ſhall be damned when they cannot help it, periſh without their own fault, and be miſerable for ever, becauſe of their unhappineſſe to be deceived through their own ſimplicity and naturall or accidentall, but inculpable infirmity.

For it cannot ſtand with the goodneſſe of God, who does ſo know our infirmities, that he pardons many things in which our wills indeed have the leaſt ſhare (but ſome they have) but are overborn with the violence of an impetuous temptation; I ſay, it is inconfiſtent with his goodneſſe to condemn thoſe who erre where the error hath nothing of the will in it, who therefore cannot repent of their error, becauſe they believe

* Alieni ſunt
à veritate qui
ſe obarmant
multitudine
Chryſ.

Numb. 10.

it true, who therefore cannot make compenſation becauſe they know not that they are tyed to dereliction of it. And although all Hereticks are in this condition, that is, they believe their errors to be true; yet there is a vaſt diſference between them who believe ſo out of ſimplicity, and them who are given over to believe a lie, as a puniſhment or an effect of ſome other wickedneſſe or impiety. For all have a concomitant aſſent to the truth of what they believe; and no man can at the ſame time believe what he does not believe, but this aſſent of the underſtanding in Hereticks is cauſed not by force of Argument, but the Argument is made forcible by ſomething that is amiſſe in his will; and although a Heretick may peradventure have a ſtronger Argument for his error then ſome true Believer for his right perſwaſion; yet it is not conſiderable how ſtrong his Argument is (becauſe in a weak underſtanding, a ſmall motive will produce a great perſwaſion; like gentle phyſick in a weak body) but that which here is conſiderable, is, what it is that made his Argument forcible. If his invincible and harmleſſe prejudice, if his weakneſſe, if his education, if his miſtaking piety, if any thing that hath no venome, nor a ſting in it, there the heartineſſe of his perſwaſion is no ſin, but his miſery and his excuſe: but if any thing that is evil *in genere morum* did incline his underſtanding, if his opinion did commence upon pride, or is nourished by covetouſneſſe, or continues through ſtupid careleſſneſſe, or increaſes by pertinacy, or is confirmed by obſtinacy, then the innocency of the error is diſbanded, his miſery is changed into a crime; and begins its own puniſhment. But by the way I muſt obſerve, that when I reckon *obſtinacy* amongſt thoſe things which make a falſe opinion criminal, it is to be underſtood with ſome diſcretion and diſtinction. For there is an obſtinacy of will which is indeed highly guilty of miſdeemeanour, and when the Schoole makes pertinacy or obſtinacy to be the formality of hereſy, they ſay not true at all, unleſſe it be meant the obſtinacy of the will and choyce; and if they doe, they ſpeak imperfectly and inartificially, this being but one of the cauſes that makes error become hereſy; the adequate and perfect formality of hereſy is whatſoever makes the error voluntary and vicious,

rious, as is cleare in Scripture, reckoning covetouſneſſe, and pride, and luſt, and whatſoever is vicious to be its cauſes; (and in habits, or morall changes and productions, whatever alters the eſſence of a habite, or gives it a new formality, is not to be reckoned the efficient but the forme) but there is alſo an obſtinacy (you may call it) but indeed, is nothing but a reſolution and confirmation of underſtanding which is not in a mans power honeſtly to alter, and it is not all the commands of humanity, that can be Argument ſufficient to make a man leave believing that for which he thinks he hath reaſon, and for which he hath ſuch Arguments as heartily convince him. Now the perſiſting in an opinion finally, and againſt all the confidence and imperiouſneſſe of humane commands, that makes not this criminall obſtinacy, if the erring perſon have ſo much humility of will as to ſubmit to whatever God ſayes, and that no vice in his will hinders him from believing it. So that we muſt carefully diſtinguiſh continuance in opinion from obſtinacy, confidence of underſtanding from peeviſhneſſe of affection, a not being convinced from a reſolution never to be convinc'd, upon humane ends and vicious principles: *Scimus quosdam quod ſemel imbibierint nolle deponere, nec propoſitum ſuum facile mutare, ſed ſalvo inter collegas pacis & concordia vinculo quedam propria que apud ſe ſemel ſint uſurpata retinere; Qua in re nec nos vim unquam facimus, aut legem damus,* ſaith S. Cyprian. And he himſelfe was ſuch a one; for hee perſiſted in his opinion of rebaptization untill death, and yet his obſtinacy was not called criminall, or his errour turned to heresy. But to return.

Lib. 2. Ep. 1. 1.

In this ſenſe, it is that a Heretick is *auſurarius*, ſelfe condemn'd, not by an immediate expreſſe ſentence of underſtanding, but by his own act or fault brought into condemnation. As it is in the Canon Law, *Noſtrius percusſor Clerici e iſſo jure excommunicate, not per ſententiam latam ab homine, but à jure.* No man hath paſſed ſentence *pro tribunali*, but Law hath decreed it *pro edito*: So it is in the caſe of a Heretick. The underſtanding which is judge, condemns him not by an expreſſe ſentence; for he erres with as much ſimplicity in the reſult, as he had malice in the principle: But there is *ſementia lata à jure*, his will which is his law, that hath condemn'd him. And this

Numb. 11.

is gathered from that ſaying of S. Paul, 2 Tim. 3. 13. *But evil men and ſeducers ſhall wax worſe and worſe, deceiving and being deceived*: Firſt, they are evil men; malice and peeviſhneſſe is in their wills; then they turn Hereticks and ſeduce others, and while they grow worſe and worſe, the error is maſter of their underſtanding, they are deceiv'd themſelves, *given over to believe a lie*, ſaith the Apoſtle: They firſt play the knave, and then play the fool; they firſt ſell themſelves to the purchaſe of vaine-glory or ill ends, and then they become poſſeſſed with a lying ſpirit, and believe thoſe things heartily, which if they were honeſt, they ſhould with Gods Grace diſcover and diſclaime. So that now we ſee that *bona fides in falſo articulo*, a hearty perſwaſion in a falſe article does not alwayes make the error to be eſteemed involuntary; but then only when it is as innocent in the principle as it is confident in the preſent perſwaſion. And ſuch perſons who by their ill lives and vicious aſtions, or manifeſt deſignes (for by their fruits yee ſhall know them) give teſtimony of ſuch criminall indiſpoſitions, ſo as competent judges by humane and prudent eſtimate may ſo judge them, then they are to be declared Hereticks, and avoided. And if this were not true, it were vaine that the Apoſtle commands us to avoid an Heretick: For no externall act can paſſe upon a man for a crime that is not cognofcible.

Numb. 11.

Now every man that erres, though in a matter of conſequence, ſo long as the foundation is intire, cannot be ſuſpected juſtly guilty of a crime to give his error a formality of hereſy; for we ſee many a good man miſerably deceiv'd (as we ſhall make it appeare afterwards) and he that is the beſt amongſt men, certainly hath ſo much humility to think he may be eaſily deceiv'd, and twenty to one but he is in ſome thing or other; yet if his error be not voluntary, and part of an ill life, then becauſe he lives a good life, he is a good man, and therefore no Heretick: No man is a Heretick againſt his will. And if it be pretended that every man that is deceived, is therefore proud, becauſe he does not ſubmit his underſtanding to the authority of God or Man reſpectively, and ſo his error becomes a hereſy: To this I anſwer, That there is no Chriſtian man
but

but will submit his understanding to God, and believes whatsoever he hath said; but alwayes provided, he knowes that God hath said so, else he must doe his duty by a readinesse to obey when he shall know it. But for obedience or humility of the understanding towards men, that is a thing of another consideration, and it must first be made evident that his understanding must be submitted to men; and who those men are, must also be certaine, before it will be adjudg'd a sinne not to submit. But if I mistake not Christs saying [*call no man master upon earth*] is so great a prejudice against this pretence, as I doubt it will goe neere wholly to make it invalid. So that as the worshipping of Angels is a humility indeed, but it is voluntary and a will-worship to an ill sence, not to be excused by the excellency of humility, nor the vertue of Religion: so is the relying upon the judgement of man, an humility too, but such as comes not under that *ὡρακὸν νουτικόν*, that obedience of Faith which is the duty of every Christian; but intrenches upon that duty which we owe to Christ as an acknowledgement that he is our great Master, and the Prince of the Catholike Church. But whether it be or be not, if that be the Question whether the disagreeing person be to be determined by the dictates of men, I am sure the dictates of men must not determine him in that Question, but it must be settled by some higher principle: So that if of that Question the disagreeing person does opine, or believe, or erre *bonâ fide*, he is not therefore to be judg'd a Heretick, because he submits not his understanding, because till it bee sufficiently made certaine to him that hee is bound to submit; he may innocently and piously disagree, and this not submitting is therefore not a crime (and so cannot make a heresy) because without a crime he may lawfully doubt whether he be bound to submit or no, for that's the Question. And if in such Questions which have influence upon a whole systeme of Theology, a man may doubt lawfully if he doubts heartily, because the authority of men being the thing in Question, cannot bee the judge of this Question, and therefore being rejected, or (which is all one) being questioned, that is, not believed, cannot render the doubting person guilty of pride, and by consequence

not of heresy, much more may particular questions be doubted of, and the authority of men examined, and yet the doubting person be humble enough, and therefore no Heretick for all this pretence. And it would be considered that humility is a duty in great ones as well as in Idiots. And as inferiours must not disagree without reason, so neither must superiours prescribe to others without sufficient authority, evidence and necessity too: And if rebellion be pride, so is tyranny; and it being *in materiall intellectuall*, both may be guilty of pride of understanding. sometimes the one in imposing, sometimes the other in a causelesse disagreeing; but in the inferiours it is then only the want of humility, when the guides impose or prescribe what God hath also taught, and then it is the disobeying Gods dictates, not mans, that makes the sinne. But then this consideration will also intervene, that as no dictate of God obliges men to believe it, unlesse I know it to be such: So neither will any of the dictates of my superiours, engage my faith, unlesse I also know, or have no reason to disbelieve, but that they are warranted to teach them to me, therefore, because God hath taught the same to them, which if I once know, or have no reason to think the contrary, if I disagree, my sinne is not in resisting humane authority, but divine. And therefore the whole businesse of submitting our understanding to humane authority, comes to nothing; for either it resolves into the direct duty of submitting to God, or if it be spoken of abstractedly, it is no duty at all.

Numb. 13.

But this pretence of a necessity of humbling the understanding, is none of the meanest arts whereby some persons have invaded, and usurpt a power over mens faith and consciences, and therefore we shall examine the pretence afterwards, and try if God hath invested any Man or company of Men with such a power. In the meane time, he that submits his understanding to all that he knowes God hath said, and is ready to submit to all that he hath said if he but know it, denying his own affections and ends, and interests and humane persuasions, laying them all down at the foot of his great Master Jesus Christ, that man hath brought his understanding into subjection, and every proud thought unto the obedience of Christ

Chriſt, and this is *ὡμολογία αἰσίου*, the obedience of Faith, which is the duty of a Chriſtian.

But to proceed: Beſides theſe heresies noted in Scripture, *Numb. 14.* the age of the Apoſtles, and that which followed, was infeſted with other heresies; but ſuch as had the ſame formality and malignity with the precedent, all of them either ſuch as taught practiſall impieties, or denyed an Article of the Creed. *Egeſippus* in *Eusebius* reckons ſeven only prime heresies that ſought to deſloure the purity of the Church: That of *Simon*, that of *Thebutes*, of *Cleobius*, of *Dofibens*, of *Gorthens*, of *Mafbotheus*; I ſuppoſe *Cerintus* to have been the ſeventh man, though he expreſſe him not: But of theſe, except the laſt, we know no particulars; but that *Egeſippus* ſayes, they were falſe Chriſts, and that their doctrine was directly againſt God and his bleſſed Sonne. *Menander* alſo was the firſt of a Sect, but he bewitched the people with his Sorceries. *Cerintus* his doctrine pretended Enthuſiaſm or a new Revelation, and ended in luſt and impious theorems in matter of uncleannesse. The *• E-*
bionites denyed Chriſt to be the Sonne of God, and affirmed him *Ἰσὺς ἀνθρώπου*, begot by naturall generation, (by occaſion of which and the importunity of the *Asian* Biſhops, *S. John* writ his Goſpel) and taught the obſervation of *Moses* Law. *Bafilides* taught it lawfull to renounce the faith, and take falſe oaths in time of Perſecution. *Carpocrates* was a very bedlam, halfe-witch, and quite mad-man, and practizd luſt, which he cald the ſecret operations to overcome the Potentates of the world. Some more there were, but of the ſame nature and peit, not of a nicety in diſpute, not a queſtion of ſecret Philoſophy, not of atomes, and undiſcernable propoſitions, but open defiance of all Faith, of all ſobriety, and of all ſanctity, excepting only the doctrine of the Millenaries, which in the beſt Ages was eſteemed no heresy, but true Catholike Doctrine, though ſince it hath juſtice done to it, and hath ſuffered a juſt condemnation.

Hitherto, and in theſe inſtances, the Church did eſteeme *Numb. 25.* and judge of heresies, in proportion to the rules and characters of Faith. For Faith being a Doctrine of piety as well as truth, that which was either deſtructive of fundamentall verity, or
 of

* Vid. Hilar.
lib. 1. de Trinit.

of Christian sanctity was against Faith, and if it made a Sect, was heresy; if not, it ended in personall impiety and went no farther. But those who as *S. Paul* sayes, not only did such things, but had pleasure in them that doe them, and therefore taught others to do what they impiously did dogmatize, they were Hereticks both in matter and form, in doctrine and deportment, towards God, and towards man, and judicable in both tribunals.

Numb. 16.

But the Scripture and Apostolicall Sermons, having expressed most high indignation against these masters of impious Sects, leaving them under prodigious characters, and horrid representations, as calling them *men of corrupt minds, reprobates concerning the faith, given over to strong delusions so the beliefe of a lye, false Apostles, false Prophets, men already condemned, and that by themselves, Anti-christs, enemies of God*; and heresy it selfe, *a work of the flesh, excluding from the kingdome of heaven*; left such impressions in the minds of all their successors, and so much zeal against such Sects, that if any opinion commenc'd in the Church, not heard of before; it oftentimes had this ill luck to run the same fortune with an old heresy. For because the Hereticks did bring in new opinions in matters of great concernment, every opinion *de novo* brought in was lyable to the same exception; and because the degree of malignity in every error was oftentimes undiscernable, and most commonly indemonstrable, their zeale was alike against all; and those Ages being full of piety, were fited to be abused with an overactive zeale, as wise persons and learned are with a too much indifferency.

Numb. 17.

But it came to passe, that the further the succession went from the Apostles, the more forward men were in numbring heresies, and that upon slighter and more uncertain grounds. Some foot-steps of this wee shall finde, if we consider the Sects that are said to have sprung in the first three hundred years, and they were pretty and quick in their springs and falls; fourescore and seven of them are reckoned. They were indeed reckoned afterward, and though when they were alive, they were not condemn'd with as much forwardnesse, as after they were dead; yet even then, confidence began to mingle with opinions lesse necessary, and mistakes in judgement were
oftener

oftener and more publike then they ſhould have been. But if they were forward in their cenſures (as ſome times ſome of them were) it is no great wonder they were deceiv'd. For what principle or *κελεύς* had they then to judge of hereties, or condemn them, beſides the ſingle dictates or decretals of private Biſhops? for Scripture was indifferently pretended by all; and concerning the meaning of it, was the Queſtion: now there was no generall Councell all that while, no opportunity for the Church to convene; and if we ſearch the communicatory letters of the Biſhops and Martyrs in thoſe dayes, we ſhall finde but few ſentences decretory concerning any Queſtion of Faith, or new ſprung opinion. And in thoſe that did, for ought appeares, the perſons were miſ-reported, or their opinions miſtaken, or at moſt, the ſentence of condemnation was no more but this; Such a Biſhop who hath had the good fortune by poſterity to be reputed a Catholike, did condemn ſuch a man or ſuch an opinion, and yet himſelfe err'd in as conſiderable matters, but meeting with better neighbours in his life time, and a more charitable poſterity, hath his memory preſerv'd in honour. It appears plain enough in the caſe of *Nicholas* the Deacon of *Antioch*, upon a miſtake of his words whereby he taught *καταργεῖς τὴν σαρκί* to abuſe the fleſh, viz. by acts of aſterity and ſelſe denyall, and mortification; ſome wicked people that were glad to be miſtaken and abuſed into a pleaſing crime, pretended that he taught them to abuſe the fleſh by filthy commixtures and pollutions: This miſtake was transmitted to poſterity with a full cry, and acts afterwards found out to juſtifie an ill opinion of him. For by *S. Hierome's* time it grew out of Queſtion, but that he was the vileſt of men, and the worſt of Hereticks; *Nicolaus Antiochenus, omnium immunditiarum conditor choros duxit ſemineos*. And againe, *Iſſe Nicolaus Diaconus ita immundus extitit ut etiam in preſepi Domini nefas perpetravit*: Accuſations that while the good man liv'd were never thought of: for his daughters were Virgins, and his Sons liv'd in holy coelibate all their lives, and himiſelfe liv'd in chaſt Wedlock; and yet his memory had rotted in perpetuall inſamy, had not God (in whole ſight, the memory of the Saints is precious) preſerv'd it by the testi-

Ad Cteſiph.

Epist. de Fa-
biano lapſo.

* L. 3. Stromat.

† L. 3. c. 26.
Hiſt.

L. 1. c. 13.

mony of * *Clement Alexandrianus*, and from him of † *Eusebius* and *Nicephorus*. But in the Catalogue of Hereticks made by *Philastrius* he stands markt with a black character as guilty of many heresies: By which one testimony we may guesse what trust is to be given to those Catalogues: Well, This good man had ill luck to fall into unskilfull hands at first; but *Irenaeus*, *Justin Martyr*, *Lactantius*, (to name no more) had better fortune; for it being still extant in their writings that they were of the Millenary opinion, *Papias* before, and *Nepos* after were censured hardly, and the opinion put into the catalogue of heresies and yet these men never suspected as guilty, but like the children of the Captivity walkt in the midst of the flame, and not so much as the smell of fire passed on them. But the uncertainty of these things is very memorable, in the Story of *Eustathius* Bishop of *Antioch* contesting with *Eusebius Pamphilus*: *Eustathius* accused *Eusebius* for going about to corrupt the *Nicene Creed*, of which slander he then acquitted himselfe (saith *Socrates*) and yet he is not cleared by posterity, for still he is suspected, and his fame not cleared: However *Eusebius* then scap'd well, but to be quit with his Adversary, he recriminates and accuses him to be a favourer of *Sabellius*, rather then of the *Nicene Canons*; an imperfect accusation, God knowes, when the crime was a suspicion, proveable only by actions capable of divers constructions, and at the most, made but some degrees of probability, and the fact itselfe did not consist in *indivisibili*, and therefore was to stand or fall, to be improv'd or lessen'd according to the will of the Judges, whom in this cause *Eustathius* by his ill fortune and a potent Adversary found harsh towards him, in so much that he was for hereby deposed in the Synod of *Antioch*; and though this was layd open in the eye of the world as being most ready at hand, with the greatest ease charged upon every man, and with greatest difficulty acquitted by any man; yet there were other suspicions raised upon him privately, or at least talkt of *ex post facto*, and pretended as causes of his deprivation, least the sentence should seem too hard for the first offence. And yet what they were no man could tell, saith the story. But it is observable what *Socrates* saith, as in excuse of such proceedings,

Τὴν δὲ ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῶν κακοποιούντων ποιεῖν αἱ ἐκκλησίαι, καὶ οὕτως ὡς ἐν ἀποσφύλις, τὰς δὲ ἀστίας τὸ ἀποσφύλις ἐκκλησίαις. "It is the manner among the Bishops, when they accuse them that are deposed, they call them wicked, but they publish not the actions of their impiety. It might possibly be that the Bishop did it in tenderness of their reputation, but yet hardly; for to punish a person publickly and highly, is a certain declaring the person punished guilty of a high crime, and then to conceal the fault upon pretence to preserve his reputation, leaves every man at liberty, to conjecture what he pleaseth, who possibly will believe it worse than it is, in as much as they think his judges so charitable as therefore to conceal the fault, least the publishing of it should be his greatest punishment, and the scandal greater then his deprivation. * However this course, if it were just in any, was unsafe in all; for it might undoe more then it could preserve, and therefore is of more danger, then it can be of charity. It is therefore too probable that the matter was not very faire; for in publick sentence the acts ought to be publick; but that they rather pretend heresy to bring their ends about, shewes how easie it is to impute that crime, and how forward they were to doe it: And that they might and did then as easily call Heretick as afterward, when *Vigilius* was condemned of heresy for saying there were *Antipodes*; or as the Fryars of late did, who suspected Greek and Hebrew of heresy, and cald their Professors Hereticks, and had like to have put *Terence* and *Demosthenes* into the *Index Expurgatorius*; sure enough they raild at them *pro concione*, therefore because they understood them not, and had reason to believe they would accidentally be enemies to their reputation among the people.

By this instance which was a while after the *Nicens* Council, where the acts of the Church were regular, judicall and orderly, we may guesse at the sentences passed upon heresy, at such times and in such cases, when their proccesse was more private, and their acts more tumultuary, their information lesse certaine, and therefore their mistakes more easie and frequent. And it is remarkable in the case of the heresy of *Montanus*, the scene of whose heresy lay withyn the first three hundred years,

* *Simpliciter pateat vitium fortasse pusillum, Quod tegitur majus creditur esse malum, Martialis.*

Numb. 18.

though it was represented in the Catalogues afterwards, and possibly the mistake concerning it, is to be put upon the score of *Epiphanius*, by whom *Montanus* and his Followers were put into the Catalogue of Hereticks for commanding abstinence from meats, as if they were unclean, and of themselves unlawful. Now the truth was, *Montanus* said no such thing, but commanded frequent abstinence, enjoyed dry diet, and an ascetick Table, not for conscience sake, but for Discipline; and yet because he did this with too much rigour and strictness of mandate, the Primitive Church mislik'd it in him, as being too neere their errour, who by a Judaicall superstition abstain'd from meats as from uncleanness. This by the way will much concern them who place too much sanctity in such Rites and Acts of Discipline; for it is an eternall Rule and of never failing truth, that such abstinences if they be obruded as Acts of originall immediate duty and sanctity, are unlawfull and superstitious; if they be for Discipline they may be good, but of no very great profit; it is that *apostla vs omnia* which *S. Paul* sayes profiteth but little; and just in the same degree the Primitive Church esteem'd them; for they therefore reprehended *Montanus*, for urging such abstinences with too much earnestness, though but in the way of Discipline, for that it was no more, *Tertullian*, who was himselfe a *Montanist*, and knew best the opinions of his own Sect, testifies; and yet *Epiphanius* reporting the errors of *Montanus*, commends that which *Montanus* truly and really taught, and which the Primitive Church condemn'd in him, and therefore represents that heresy to another sense, and affixes that to *Montanus*, which *Epiphanius* believ'd a heresy, and yet which *Montanus* did not teach. And this also among many other things lessens my opinion very much of the integrity or discretion of the old Catalogues of Hereticks, and much abates my confidence towards them.

Numb. 19. And now that I have mentioned them casually in passing by, I shall give a short account of them; for men are much mistaken; some in their opinions concerning the truth of them, as believing them to be all true, some concerning their purpose as thinking them sufficient not only to condemn all those

theſe opinions, there called hereticall; but to be a precedent to all Ages of the Church to be free and forward in calling Heretick. But he that conſiders the Catalogues themſelves, as they are collected by *Epiphanius*, *Philaftrius*, and *S. Auſtin*, ſhall finde that many are reckoned for Hereticks for opinions in matters diſputable, and undetermin'd; and of no conſequence; and that in theſe Catalogues of Hereticks there are men numbred for Hereticks, which by every ſide reſpectively are acquitted; ſo that there is no company of men in the world that admit theſe Catalogues as good Records, or ſufficient ſentences of condemnation. For the Churches of the Reformation, I am certain, they acquit *Aerius* for denying prayer for the dead, and the *Euſtathians* for denying invocation of Saints. And I am partly of opinion that the Church of *Rome* is, not willing to call the *Collyridians* Hereticks for offering a Cake to the Virgin *Mary*, unleſſe ſhe alſo will runne the hazard of the ſame ſentence for offering Candles to her: And that they will be glad with *S. Auſtin* (*l. 6. de hereſ. c. 86.*) to excuſe the * *Tertullianiſts* for picturing God in a viſible corporall repreſentment. And yet theſe Sects are put in the black book by *Epiphanius* and *S. Auſtin*, and *Iſidore* reſpectively. I remember alſo that the *Oſſeni* are cald Hereticks, becauſe they reſuſed to worſhip toward the Eaſt; and yet in that diſſent, I finde not the malignity of a hereſy, nor any thing againſt an Article of Faith or good manners; and it being only in circumſtance, it were hard, if they were otherwiſe pious men and true believers, to ſend them to Hell for ſuch a triſle. The *Parermentia* reſuſed to follow other mens dictates like ſheep, but would expound Scripture according to the beſt evidence themſelves could finde, and yet were called Hereticks whether they expounded true or no. The * *Paulicians* for being offended at croſſes, the *Proclians* for ſaying in a regenerate man all his finnes were not quite dead, but only curbed and aſſwaged, were called Hereticks, and ſo condemned; for ought I know for affirming that which all pious men ſeele in themſelves to be too true. And he that will conſider how numerous the Catalogues are, and to what a volumn they are come in their laſt collections, to no leſſe then five hundred and twenty

* *D. Thomaſ.*
cont. gent. c.
21.

* *Euthym.*
para. 1. tit. 27.
Epiphanius hereſ.
64.

(for ſo many hereſies and Hereticks are reckoned by *Præſculus*) may think that if a re-trenchment were juſtly made of truths, and all impertinencies, and all opinions, either ſtill diſputable, or leſſe conſiderable, the number would much decreaſe; and therefore that the Catalogues are much amiſſe, and the name Heretick is made a *terrificamentum* to affright people from their beſiefe, or to diſcountenance the perſons of men, and diſrepute them, that their Schooles may be empty and their Diſciples few.

Numb. 20.

So that I ſhall not neede to inſtance how that ſome men were called Hereticks by *Philaſtrius* for rejecting the tranſlation of the Lxx. and following the Bible of *Aquila*, wherein the great faults mentioned by *Philaſtrius*, are that he tranſlates *Χριςτος* *Θεῦ*, not *Chriſtum*, but *unſtūm Dei*, and in ſtead of *Emanuel* writes *Deus nobiſcum*. But this moſt concerns them of the Primitive Church with whom the tranſlation of *Aquila* was in great reputation, *is enim veluti plus à quibuſdam intellexiſſe laudatur*. It was ſuppoſed he was a greater Clerk and underſtood more then ordinary; it may be ſo he did. But whether yea or no, yet ſince the other Tranſlators by the Confeſſion of *Philaſtrius*, *quedam prætermiſſiſſe neceſſitate urgente cogerentur*, if ſome wiſe men or unwiſe did follow a Tranſlator who underſtood the Originall well (for ſo *Aquila* had learnt amongſt the Jewes) it was hard to call men Hereticks for following his Tranſlation, eſpecially ſince the other Bibles (which were thought to have in them contradictions; and, it was confeſſed, had omitted ſome things) were excuſed by neceſſity, and the others neceſſity of following *Aquila*, when they had no better was not at all conſidered, nor a leſſe crime then hereſy laid upon their ſcore. Such another was the hereſy of the *Quartodecimani*; for the *Eaſterlings* were all proclaimed Hereticks for keeping Eaſter after the manner of the Eaſt; and as *Socrates* and *Nicophorus* report, the Biſhop of *Rome* was very forward to Excommunicate all the Biſhops of the leſſer *Aſia* for obſerving the Feaſt according to the Tradition of their Anceſtors, though they did it modeſtly, quietly, and without faction; and although they pretended, and were as well able to prove their Tradition from *S. John*, of ſo obſerving

* *Philaſtr. 99.*
eoꝝ inter hæ-
reticos nume-
rat qui ſpira-
culum vite in
libro Geneſi.
interpretantur
animam rati-
onalem, & non
potius gratiam
Spiritus ſancti.

ir,

it, as the Western Church could prove their Tradition derivative from *S. Peter* and *S. Paul*. If such things as these make up the Catalogues of Hereticks (as we see they did) their accounts differ from the Precedents they ought to have followed, that is, the censures Apostolicall, and therefore are unsafe Precedents for us; and unless they took the liberty of using the word heresy, in a lower sense, then the world now doth, since the Councils have been forward in pronouncing Anathema, and took it only for a distinct sense, and a differing persuasion in matters of opinion and minute Articles, we cannot excuse the persons of the men: But if they intended the crime of heresy against those opinions as they laid them down in their Catalogues, that crime (I say) which is a work of the flesh, which excludes from the Kingdome of Heaven, all that I shall say against them, is, that the causeless curse shall return empty, and no man is damn'd the sooner, because his enemy cries *o naldpari*, and they that were the Judges and Accusers might erre as well as the persons accused, and might need as charitable construction of their opinions and practices as the other. And of this we are sure they had no warrant from any rule of Scripture or practice Apostolicall, for driving so furiously and hastily in such decretory sentences. But I am willing rather to believe their sense of the word *heresy* was more gentle then with us it is, and for that they might have warrant from Scripture.

But by the way, I observe that although these Catalogues are a great instance to shew that they whose Age and spirits were farre distant from the Apostles, had also other judgements concerning Faith and heresy, then the Apostles had, and the Ages Apostolicall; yet these Catalogues although they are reports of heresies in the second and third Ages, are not to be put upon the account of those Ages, nor to be reckoned as an instance of their judgement, which although it was in some degrees more culpable then that of their Predecessors, yet in respect of the following Ages it was innocent and modest. But these Catalogues I speak of, were set down according to the sense of the then present ages, in which as they in all probability did differ from the apprehensions of the former Centuries, so it is certain, there were differing learnings, other fancies,

Numb. 21.

fancies, divers representations and judgements of men depending upon circumstances which the first Ages knew, and the following Ages did not; and therefore the Catalogues were drawn with some truth, but lesse certainty, as appears in their differing about the Authours of some heresies; severall opinions imputed to the same, and some put in the roll of Hereticks by one, which the other left out; which to me is an Argument that the Collectors were determin'd, not by the sense and sentences of the three first Ages, but by themselves, and some circumstances about them, which to reckon for Hereticks, which not. And that they themselves were the prime Judges, or perhaps some in their own Age together with them; but there was not any sufficient externall judicatory competent to declare hereby that by any publike or sufficient sentence or acts of Court had furnished them with warrant for their Catalogues. And therefore they are no Argument sufficient that the first Ages of the Church, which certainly were the best, did much recede from that which I shewed to be the sense of the Scripture, and the practise of the Apostles; they all contented themselves with the Apostles Creed as the rule of the Faith; and therefore were not forward to judge of heresy, but by analogy to their rule of Faith: And those Catalogues made after these Ages are not sufficient Arguments that they did otherwise; but rather of the weaknesse of some persons, or of the spirit and genius of the Age in which the Compilers liv'd, in which the device of calling all differing opinions by the name of heresies, might grow to be a design to serve ends, and to promote interests, as often as an act of zeale and just indignation against evill persons destroyers of the Faith and corrupters of manners.

Numb. 22.

For whatever private mens opinions were, yet till the *Nicens* Councell, the rule of Faith was intire in the Apostles Creed, and provided they retained that, easily they broke not the unity of Faith, however differing opinions might possibly commence in such things in which a liberty were better suffered then prohibited with a breach of charity. And this appears exactly in the Question between *S. Cyprian of Carthage*, and *Stephen Bishop of Rome*, in which one instance it is easie to see what was lawfull and safe for a wise and good man, and yet how others began
even

even then to be abuſed by that temptation, which ſince hath invaded all Chriſtendome. S. *Cyprian* re-baptized Hereticks, and thought he was bound ſo to doe; calls a Synod in *Africk* as being Metropolitane, and confirms his opinion by the conſent of his Suffragans and Brethren, but ſtill with ſo much modeſty, that if any man was of another opinion, he judg'd him not, but gave him that liberty that he deſired himſelf; *Stephen* Biſhop of *Rome* growes angry, Excommunicates the Biſhops of *Asia* and *Africa*, that in divers Synods had conſented to re-baptization, and without peace, and without charity, condemns them for Hereticks. Indeed here was the rareſt mixture and conjunction of unlikelihoods that I have obſerved. Here was error of opinion with much modeſty and ſweetneſſe of temper on one ſide; and on the other, an over-zealous and impetuous zeal to atteſt a truth, it uſes not to be ſo; for error uſually is ſupported with confidence, and truth ſuppreſſed and diſcountenanc'd by indifferency. But that it might appear that the error was not the ſinne, but the uncharitableneſſe, *Stephen* was accounted a zealous and furious perſon, and S. *Cyprian* though deceiv'd, yet a very good man, and of great ſanctity. For although every error is to be oppoſed, yet according to the variety of errors, ſo is there variety of proceedings. If it be againſt Faith, that is, a deſtruction of any part of the foundation, it is with zeal to be reſited, and we have for it an Apoſtolicall warrant, *contend earneſtly for the Faith*; but then as theſe things recede farther from the foundation, our certainty is the leſſe, and their neceſſity not ſo much, and therefore it were very fit, that our confidence ſhould be according to our evidence, and our zeal according to our confidence, and our confidence ſhould then be the Rule of our Communion; and the lightneſſe of an Article ſhould be conſidered with the weight of a precept of charity. And therefore, there are ſome errors to be reprov'd, rather by a private friend than a publique cenſure, and the perſons of the men not avoided but admoniſhed, and their Doctrine rejected, not their Communion; ſew opinions are of that malignity which are to be rejected with the ſame exterminating ſpirit, and confidence of averſation, with which the firſt Teachers of Chriſtianity condemn'd

* Vid. S. Aug. l.
1. c. 6. de baptis.
contra Donat.

Adv. hereſ.
c. 11.

denn'd *Ebion*, *Manes*, and *Cerintbus*; and in the condemnation of Hereticks, the perſonall iniquity is more conſiderable then the obliquity of the doctrine, not for the rejection of the Article, but for cenſuring the perſons; and therefore it is the piety of the man that excuſed *S. Cyprian*, which is a certain Argument that it is not the opinion, but the impiety that condemns and makes the Heretick. And this was it which *Vincentius Lirinensis* ſaid in this very caſe of *S. Cyprian*, *Vnius & ejusdem opinionis (mirum videri poſſe) judicamus authores Catholicos, & ſequaces hereticos. Excusamus Magiſtros, & condemnamus Scholaſticos, Qui ſcripſerunt libros ſunt heredes Cæli, quorum librorum deſenſores detruduntur ad infernum.* Which ſaying, if we confront againſt the ſaying of *Salvian* condemning the firſt Authors of the *Arrian* Sect, and acquitting the Followers, we are taught by theſe two wiſe men, that an error is not it that ſends a man to Hell, but he that begins the hereſy, and is the authour of the Sect, he is the man mark'd out to ruine; and his Followers ſcap'd, when the *Hereſiarch* commenc'd the error upon pride and ambition, and his Followers went after him in ſimplicity of their heart; and ſo it was moſt commonly: but on the contrary, when the firſt man in the opinion was honeſtly and invincibly deceived, as *S. Cyprian* was, and that his Scholars to maintaine their credit, or their ends, maintaine the opinion, not for the excellency of the reaſon perſwading, but for the benefit and accruments, or peeviſhneſſe, as did the *Donatiſts*, *qui de Cypriani authoritate ſibi carnaliter blandiuntur*, as *S. Auſtin* ſaid of them; then the Scholars are the Hereticks, and the Maſter is a Catholike. For his error is not the hereſy formally, and an erring perſon may be a Catholike. A wicked perſon in his error, becomes heretick, when the good man in the ſame error ſhall have all the rewards of Faith. For whatever an ill man believes, if he therefore believe it becauſe it ſerves his own ends, be his belief true or falſe, the man hath an hereticall minde, for to ſerve his own ends, his minde is prepared to believe a lie. But a good man that believes what according to his light, and upon the uſe of his morall induſtry he thinks true, whether he hits upon the right or no, becauſe he hath a minde deſirous of truth, and prepared

prepared to believe every truth, is therefore acceptable to God, because nothing hindred him from it, but what hee could not help, his misery and his weaknesse, which being imperfections meerly naturall, which God never punishes, he stands faire for a blessing of his morality, which God alwayes accepts. So that now if *Stephen* had followed the example of God Almighty, or retained but the same peaceable spirit which his Brother of *Cathage* did, he might with more advantage to truth, and reputation both of wildome and piety have done his duty in attesting what he believ'd to be true; for we are as much bound to be zealous pursuers of peace as earnest contenders for the Faith. I am sure more earnest we ought to be for the peace of the Church, then for an Article which is not of the Faith, as this Question of re-baptization was not; for *S. Cyprian* died in beliete against it, and yet was a Catholike, and a Martyr for the Christian Faith.

The summe is this *S. Cyprian* did right in a wrong cause (as it hath been since judg'd) and *Stephen* did ill in a good cause; as farre then as piety and charity is to be prefer'd before a true opinion, so farre is *S. Cyprian's* practise a better precedent for us, and an example of primitive sanctity, then the zeale and indiscretion of *Stephen*: *S. Cyprian* had not learn'd to forbid to any one a liberty of prophesying or interpretation, if hee transgressed not the foundation of Faith and the Creed of the Apostles.

Well thus it was, and thus it ought to be in the first Ages, the Faith of Christendome rested till upon the same foundation, and the judgements of heresies were accordingly, or were amisse; but the first great violation of this truth was, when Generall Councils came in, and the Symbols were enlarged, and new Articles were made as much of necessity to be believed as the Creed of the Apostles, and damnation threatned to them that did dissent, and at last the Creeds multiplyed in number, and in Articles, and the liberty of prophesying began to be something restrained.

And this was of so much the more force and efficacy because it began upon great reason, and in the first instance, with successe good enough. For I am much pleased with the en-

larging of the Creed, which the Councell of *Nice* made, be-
 cause they enlarged it to my ſenſe; but I am not ſure that o-
 thers are ſatisfied with it; While we look upon the Article
 they did determine, we ſee all things well enough; but there
 are ſome wiſe perſonages conſider it in all circumſtances, and
 think the Church had been more happy if ſhe had not been in
 ſome ſenſe conſtrain'd to alter the ſimplicity of her faith, and
 make it more curious and articulate, ſo much that he had need
 be a ſubtle man to underſtand the very words of the new de-
 terminations.

Numb. 26.

Socra. l. i. c. 8.

For the firſt *Alexander* Biſhop of *Alexandria*, in the pre-
 ſence of his Clergy, entreats ſomewhat more curiouſly of the
 ſecret of the myſterious Trinity, and Unity, ſo curiouſly, that
Arius (who was a Sophiſter too ſubtle as it afterward ap-
 pear'd) miſunderſtood him, and thought he intended to bring
 in the hereſy of *Sabellius*. For while he taught the Unity of
 the Trinity, either he did it ſo inartificially, or ſo intricately,
 that *Arius* thought he did not diſtinguiſh the perſons, when
 the Biſhop intended only the unity of nature. Againſt this
Arius furioſly drives, and to conſute *Sabellius*, and in him
 (as he thought) the Biſhop, diſtinguiſhes the natures too, and
 ſo to ſecure the Article of the Trinity, deſtroys the Unity.
 It was the firſt time the Queſtion was diſputed in the world,
 and in ſuch myſterious niceties, poſſibly every wiſe man may
 underſtand ſomething, but few can underſtand all, and therefore
 ſuſpect what they underſtand not, and are furioſly zealous
 for that part of it which they doe perceive. Well; it hapned
 in theſe as alwayes in ſuch caſes, in things men underſtand not
 they are moſt impetuous; and becauſe ſuſpition is a thing infi-
 nite in degrees, for it hath nothing to determine it, a ſuſpiti-
 ous perſon is ever moſt violent; for his feares are worſe then
 the thing feared, becauſe the thing is limited, but his feares
 are not; ſo that upon this, grew contentions on both ſides, and
 tumults, rayling and reviling each other; and then the Laity
 were drawn into parts, and the *Aleſians* abetted the wrong
 part, and the right part fearing to be overborn, did any thing
 that was next at hand to ſecure it ſelfe. Now then they that
 lived in that Age, that underſtood the men, that ſaw how quiet
 the

Lib. 1; c. 6.

the Church was before this ſtirre, how miſerably rent now, what little benefit from the Queſtion, what ſchiſme about it, gave other cenſures of the buſineſſe, then we ſince have done, who only look upon the Article determin'd with truth and approbation of the Church generally, ſince that time. But the Epiſtle of *Conſtantine* to *Alexander* and *Arius*, tells the truth, and chides them both for commencing the Queſtion, *Alexander* for broaching it, *Arius* for taking it up; and although this be true, that it had been better for the Church it never had begun, yet being begun, what is to be done in it? of this alſo in that admirable Epiſtle, we have the Emperours judgement (I ſuppoſe not without the adviſe and privy of *Hofius* Biſhop of *Corduba*, whom the Emperour lov'd and truſted much, and imployed in the delivery of the Letters.) "For firſt he calls it a certain vain piece of a Queſtion, ill begun and more unadviſedly publiſhed, a Queſtion which no Law or Eccleſiaſticall Canon defineth, a fruitleſſe contention, the product of idle braines, a matter ſo nice, ſo obſcure, ſo intricate that it was neither to be explicated by the Clergy, nor underſtood by the people, a diſpute of words, a doctrine inexplicable, but moſt dangerous when taught leaſt it introduce diſcord or blaſphemy; and therefore, the Objector was raſh, and the answerer unadviſed; for it concern'd not the ſubſtance of Faith, or the worſhip of God, nor any cheiſe commandment of Scripture, and therefore, why ſhould it be the matter of diſcord? For though the matter be grave; yet becauſe neither neceſſary, nor explicable, the contention is triſing and toyiſh. And therefore, as the Philoſophers of the ſame Sect, though differing in explication of an opinion, yet more love for the unity of their Profeſſion, then diſagree for the difference of opinion; So ſhould Chriſtians believing in the ſame God, retaining the ſame Faith, having the ſame hopes, oppoſed by the ſame enemies, not fall at variance upon ſuch diſputes, conſidering our underſtandings are not all alike; and therefore, neither can our opinions in ſuch myſterious Articles: ſo that the matter being of no great importance, but vaine, and a toy in reſpect of the excellent bleſſings of peace and charity, it were good that *Alexander* and *Arius* ſhould leave contending,

keep

“ keep their opinions to themſelves, ask each other forgiveness, and give mutuall toleration. This is the ſubſtance of *Conſtantine's* letter, and it contains in it much reaſon, if he did not undervalue the Queſtion; but it ſeems it was not then thought a Queſtion of Faith, but of nicety of diſpute; they both did believe one God, and the holy Trinity. Now then that he afterward called the *Nicene* Councell, it was upon occaſion of the vileneſſe of the men of the *Arian* part, their eternall diſcord and pertinacious wrangling, and to bring peace into the Church; that was the neceſſity; and in order to it was the determination of the Article. But for the Article it ſelfe, the Letter declares what opinion he had of that, and this Letter was by *Socrates* called a *wonderfull exhortation, full of grace and ſober counſels*; and ſuch as *Hofius* himſelf, who was the meſſenger, preſſed with all earneſtneſſe, with all the ſkill and Authority he had.

Numb. 27.

I know the opinion the world had of the Article afterward is quite differing from this cenſure given of it before; and therefore they have put it into the Creed (I ſuppoſe) to bring the world to unity, and to prevent Sedition in this Queſtion, and the accidentall blaſphemies, which were occaſioned by their curious talkings of ſuch ſecret myſteries, and by their illiterate reſolutions. But although the Article was determin'd with an excellent ſpirit, and we all with much reaſon profeſſe to believe it; yet it is another conſideration, whether or no it might not have been better determin'd, if with more ſimplicity; and another yet, whether or no ſince many of the Biſhops who did believe this thing, yet did not like the nicety and curioſity of expreſſing it, it had not been more agreeable to the praſiſe of the Apoſtles to have made a determination of the Article by way of Expoſition of the Apoſtles Creed, and to have left this in a reſcript, for record to all poſterity, and not to have enlarged the Creed with it; for ſince it was an Explication of an Article of the Creed of the Apoſtles, as Sermons are of places of Scripture, it was thought by ſome, that Scripture might with good profit, and great truth be expounded, and yet the expoſitions not put into the Canon, or goe for Scripture, but that left ſtill in the naked Originall ſimplicity, and ſo much the rather

rather ſince that Explication was further from the foundation, and though moſt certainly true, yet not penn'd by ſo infallible a Spirit, as was that of the Apoſtles; and therefore not with ſo much evidence, as certainty. And if they had pleaſed, they might have made uſe of an admirable precedent to this and many other great and good purpoſes, no leſſe then of the bleſſed Apoſtles, whoſe Symbol they might have imitated, with as much ſimplicity as they did the Expreſſions of Scripture, when they firſt compoſed it. For it is moſt conſiderable, that although in reaſon, every clause in the Creed ſhould be clear, and ſo inopportune and unapt to variety of interpretation, that there might be no place left for ſeverall ſenſes or variety of Expoſitions: yet when they thought fit to insert ſome myſteries into the Creed, which in Scripture were expreſſed in ſo myſterious words, that the laſt and moſt explicite ſenſe would ſtill be latent, yet they who (if ever any did) underſtood all the ſenſes and ſecrets of it, thought it not fit to uſe any words but the words of Scripture, particularly in the Articles of [Chriſts deſcending into Hell, and ſitting at the right hand of God] to ſhew us, that thoſe Creeds are beſt which keep the very words of Scripture; and that Faith is beſt which hath greateſt ſimplicity, and that it is better in all caſes humbly to ſubmit, then curiouſly to enquire and pry into the myſtery under the cloud, and to hazard our Faith by improving our knowledge: If the *Nicene* Fathers had done ſo too, poſſibly the Church would never have repented it.

And indeed the experience, the Church had afterwards, *Numb. 23.* ſhewed that the Biſhops and Prieſts were not ſatisfied in all circumſtances, nor the ſchiſm appeaſed, nor the perſons agreed, nor the Canons accepted, nor the Article underſtood, nor any thing right, but when they were overborn with Authority, which Authority when the ſcales turned, did the ſame ſervice and promotion to the contrary.

But it is conſiderable, that it was not the Article or the thing it ſelf that troubled the diſagreeing perſons, but the manner of repreſenting it. For the five Diſſenters, *Eusebius* of *Nicomedia*, *Theognis*, *Maris*, *Theonas*, and *Secundus*, believed Chriſt to be very God of very God, but the clause of *ὁ ἀληθινός* they,

Vide Soxo-
men. lib. 2.
c. 18.

Socrat. lib. 1.
cap. 26.

* Non impru-
denter dixit,
qui curioſe ex-
plicationi hu-
jus myſterii
dictum Ariſto-
nis Philoſophi
applicuit, Hel-
leborus niger
ſi craſſius ſu-
matur purgat
& ſanat. Quum
autem teritur,
& comminui-
tur, ſuffocat.

they deſided as being perſwaded by their Logick, that he was neither of the ſubſtance of the Father, by diviſion as a piece of a lump, nor derivation as children from their Parents, nor by production as buds from trees, and no body could tell them any other way at that time, and that made the fire to burn ſtill. And that was it I ſaid; if the Article had been with more ſimplicity, and leſſe nicety determin'd; charity would have gain'd more, and faith would have loſt nothing. And we ſhall finde the wiſeſt of them all, for ſo *Eusebius Pamphilus* was eſteem'd, publiſhed a Creed or Confeſſion in the Synod, and though he and all the reſt believed that great myſtery of God-lineſſe, *God manifested in the fleſh*, yet he was not fully ſatisfied, nor ſo ſoone of the claue of *one ſubſtance*, till he had done a little violence to his own underſtanding; for even when he had ſubſcribed to the claue of *one ſubſtance*, he does it with a proteſtation, that *heretofore he never had been acquainted, nor accuſtomed himſelfe to ſuch ſpeeches*. And the ſenſe of the word was either ſo ambiguous, or their meaning ſo uncertain that *Andreas i-tricius* does with ſome probability diſpute that the *Nicene Fathers* by *ἑνωσιον*, did meane *Patris ſimilitudinem, non eſſentia unitatem*, *Sylva. q. c. 1.* And it was ſo well underſtood by perſonages diſintereſted, that when *Arius* and *Euzoius* had confeſſed Chriſt to be *Deus verbum*, without inserting the claue of *one ſubſtance*, the Emperour by his Letter approv'd of his Faith, and reſtor'd him to his Countrey and Office, and the Communion of the Church. And along time after although the Article was believed with * nicety enough, yet when they added more words ſtill to the myſtery, and brought in the word *conſubſtantialis*, ſaying there were three hypochaſes in the holy Trinity; it was ſo long before it could be underſtood, that it was believed therefore, becauſe they would not oppoſe their Superiours, or diſturb the peace of the Church, in things which they thought could not be underſtood: in ſo much that *S. Hierom* writ to *Damaſus*, in theſe words: *Discerne ſi placet obſecro, non timebo tres hypochaſes dicere, ſi jubetis*; and againe, *Obſeſor beatiitudinem tuam per Crucifixum, mundi ſalutem, per ἑνωσιον Trinitatem, ut mihi Epistoſis tuis, ſive tacendarum ſive dicendarum hypochaſon deſint authoritas.*

But

But without all Queſtion, the Fathers determin'd the Queſtion with much truth, though I cannot ſay, the Arguments upon which they built their Decrees, were ſo good as the concluſion it ſelfe was certain; But that which in this caſe is conſiderable, is whether or no they did well in putting a curſe to the foot of their Decree, and the Decree it ſelfe into the Symbol, as if it had been of the ſame neceſſity? For the curſe, *Eusebius Pamphilus* could hardly finde in his heart to ſubſcribe, at laſt he did; but with this claue that he ſubſcribed it becauſe the forme of curſe did only *forbid men to acquaint themſelves with forraign ſpeeches and unwritten languages*, whereby conuſion and diſcord is brought into the Church. So that it was not ſo much a magiſteriall high aſſertion of the Article, as an endeavour to ſecure the peace of the Church. And to the ſame purpoſe for ought I know, the Fathers compoſed a Form of Confeſſion, not as a preſcript Rule of Faith to build the hopes of our ſalvation on, but as a *teſſera* of that Communion which by publike Authority was therefore eſtabliſhed upon thoſe Articles becauſe the Articles were true, though not of prime neceſſity, and becauſe that unity of confeſſion was judg'd, as things then ſtood, the beſt preſerver of the unity of minds.

But I ſhall obſerve this, that although the *Nicene* Fathers in that caſe at that time, and in that conjuncture of circumſtances did well (and yet their approbation is made by after Ages *ex poſt facto*) yet if this precedent had been followed by all Councils (and certainly they had equall power, if they had thought it equally reaſonable) and that they had put all their Decrees into the Creed, as ſome have done ſince, to what a volume had the Creed by this time ſwell'd? and all the houſe had run into foundation, nothing left for ſuper-ſtructures. But that they did not, it appears ¹ that ſince they thought all their Decrees true, yet they did not think them all neceſſary, at leaſt not in that degree, and that they publiſhed ſuch Decrees, they did it *declarando*, not *imperando*, as Doctours in their Chaires, not maſters of other mens faith and conſciences.

² And yet there is ſome more modeſty, or warineſſe or neceſſity (what ſhall I call it?) then this comes too: for why are

not all controversies determin'd? but even when Generall Assemblies of Prelates have been, some controversies that have been very vexatious, have been pretermitted, and others of leſſe conſequence have been determin'd: Why did never any Generall Councell condemn in expreſſe ſentence the *Pelagian* hereſy, that great peſt, that ſubtle infection of Chriſtendom? and yet divers Generall Councells did aſſemble while the hereſy was in the world. Both theſe caſes in ſeverall degrees leave men in their liberty of believing and propheſying. The latter proclaimes that all controversies cannot be determin'd to ſufficient purpoſes, and the firſt declares that thoſe that are, are not all of them matters of Faith, and themſelves are not ſo ſecure, but they may bee deceived; and therefore poſſibly it were better it were let alone; for if the latter leaves them divided in their opinions, yet their Communion, and therefore probably their charities are not divided; but the former divides their Communion, and hinders their intereſt; and yet for ought is certain, the accuſed perſon is the better Catholike. And yet after all this, it is not ſafety enough to ſay, let the Councell or Prelates determine Articles warily, ſeldome, with great caution, and with much ſweetneſſe and modeſty. For though this be better then to doe it raſhly, frequently and furioſly; yet if we once tranſgreſſe the bounds ſet us by the Apoſtles in their Creed, and not onely preach other truths, but determine them *pro tribunali* as well as *pro cathedra*, although there be no errour in the ſubject matter (as in *Nice* there was none) yet if the next Ages ſay they will determine another Article with as much care and caution, and pretend as great a neceſſity, there is no hindring them, but by giving reaſons againſt it; and ſo like enough they might have done againſt the decreeing the Article at *Nice*; yet that is not ſufficient; for ſince the Authority of the *Nicene* Councell hath grown to the heighth of a mountainous prejudice againſt him that ſhould ſay it was ill done, the ſame reaſon and the ſame neceſſity may be pretended by any Age and in any Councell, and they think themſelves warrant'd by the great precedent at *Nice*, to proceed as peremptorily as they did; but then if any other Aſſembly of learned men may poſſibly

poſſibly be deceiv'd, were it not better they ſhould ſpare the labour, then that they ſhould with ſo great pomp and ſolemnities engage mens perſwaſions, and determine an Article which after Ages muſt reſcind; for therefore moſt certainly in their own Age, the point with ſafety of faith and ſalvation, might have been diſputed and diſbelieved: And that many mens faiths have been tyed up by Acts and Decrees of Councils for thoſe Articles in which the next Age did ſee a liberty had better beene preſerved, becauſe an error was determined, wee ſhall afterward receive a more certaine account.

And therefore the Council of Nice did well, and *Conſtantinople* did well, ſo did *Ephesus* and *Chalcedon*; but it is becauſe the Articles were truly determin'd (for that is part of my beliefe;) but who is ſure it ſhould be ſo before hand, and whether the points there determin'd were neceſſary or no to be believ'd or to be determin'd, if peace had been concern'd in it through the faction and diviſion of the parties, I ſuppoſe the judgement of *Conſtantine* the Emperour and the famous *Hofius* of *Corduba* is ſufficient to inſtruct us, whoſe authority I rather urge then reaſons, becauſe it is a prejudice and not a reaſon I am to contend againſt. Numb. 32.

So that ſuch determinations and publiſhing of Confeſſions with Authority of Prince and Biſhop, are ſometimes of very good uſe for the peace of the Church, and they are good alſo to determine the judgement of indifferent perſons, whoſe reaſons of either ſide, are not too great to weigh down the probability of that Authority: But for perſons of confident and imperious underſtandings, they on whoſe ſide the determination is, are armed with a prejudice againſt the other, and with a weapon to affront them, but with no more to convince them; and they againſt whom the deciſion is, doe the more readily betake themſelves to the deſenſive, and are engaged upon conteſtation and publike enmities, for ſuch Articles which either might ſafely have been unknown, or with much charity diſputed. Therefore the *Nicene* Council, although it have the advantage of an acquir'd and preſcribing Authority, yet it muſt not become a precedent to others, leaſt the inconveniences of multiplying Numb. 33.

multiplying more Articles upon as great pretence of reason as then, make the act of the *Nicene* Fathers in straightning Propheſſing, and enlarging the Creed, become accidentally an inconvenience. The first restraint, although it it had been complained of, might poſſibly have been better conſider'd of; yet the inconvenience is not viſible, till it comes by way of precedent to uſher in more. It is like an Arbitrary power, which although by the ſame reaſon it take fix pence from the ſubject, it may take a hundred pound, and then a thouſand, and then all, yet ſo long as it is within the firſt bounds, the inconvenience is not ſo great; but when it comes to be a precedent or argument for more, then the firſt may juſtly be complained of, as having in it that reaſon in the principle, which brought the inconvenience in the ſequell; and we have ſeen very ill conſequents from innocent beginnings.

Numb. 34.

And the inconveniences which might poſſibly ariſe from this precedent, thoſe wiſe Perſonages alſo did fore-ſee, and therefore although they took liberty in *Nice*, to adde ſome Articles, or at leaſt more expliciteſly to declare the firſt Creed, yet they then would have all the world to reſt upon that and goe no farther, as believing that to be ſufficient. *S. Athanaſius*

Epiſt ad Epiſc.

declares their opinion, ἡ γὰρ ἐστὶν αὐτῆς ἡ εὐαγγελικὴ καὶ τὰς δοῦναι χάρις, ὁμοθυμαδὸν πῖστις, αὐτοῦ κτλ. That Faith which thoſe Fathers there confeſſed, was ſufficient for the

Auguſt. 3.c.14.

reſutation of all impiety, and the eſtabliſhment of all Faith in Chriſt and true Religion. And therefore there was a famous Epistle written by *Zeno* the Emperour, called the *Εὐαγγελικὴ* or the Epistle of reconciliation, in which all diſagreeing intereſts, are entreated to agree in the *Nicene* Symbol, and a promiſe made upon that condition to communicate with all other Sects, adding withall, that the Church ſhould never receive any other Symbol then that which was compoſed by the *Nicene* Fathers. And however *Honorius* was condemn'd for a *Monotheliſt*; yet in one of the Epistles which the ſixth Synod alledged againſt him, (*viz.* the ſecond) he gave them counſell that would have done the Church as much ſervice as the determination of the Article did; for he adviſed them not to be
curious

curious in their diſputings, nor dogmaticall in their determinations about that Queſtion; and becauſe the Church was not uſed to diſpute in that Queſtion, it were better to preſerve the ſimplicity of Faith, then to enſnare mens conſciences by a new Article. And when the Emperour *Conſtantius* was by his Faction engaged in a contrary praſtiſe, the inconvenience and unreaſonableneſſe was ſo great, that a prudent Heathen obſerved and noted it in this character of *Conſtantius*, *Chriſtianam religionem abſolutam & ſimplicem* [N.B.] *amili ſuperſtitione confudit. In qua ſervandâ perplexius quam in componendâ gratius, excitavit diſſidia que progreſſa fuſius aluit concertatione verborum dum ritum omnem ad ſuum trahere conatur arbitrium.*

And yet men are more lead by Example then either by Reaſon or by Precept; for in the Councell of *Conſtantinople* one Article *de novo & integro* was added, viz. *I believe one Baptiſm for the remiſſion of ſinnes*; and then againe they were ſo confident, that that Confeſſion of Faith was ſo abſolutely intire, and that no man ever after ſhould neede to adde any thing to the integrity of Faith, that the Fathers of the Councell of *Ephesus* pronounced Anathema to all thoſe that ſhould adde any thing to the Creed of *Conſtantinople*. And yet for all this, the Church of *Rome* in a Synod at *Gentilly* added the claue of *Filioque*, to the Article of the proceſſion of the holy Ghoſt, and what they have done ſince, all the world knowes, *Exempla non conſiſtunt, ſed quamvis in ſenſum recepta tramite, latiffimè evagandi ſibi faciunt poteſtatem.* All men were perſwaded that it was moſt reaſonable the limits of Faith ſhould be no more enlarged; but yet they enlarged it themſelves, and bound others from doing it, like an intemperate Father, who becauſe he knowes he does ill himſelfe, enjoyns temperance to his Son, but continues to be intemperate himſelfe.

Numb. 35.

But now if I ſhould be queſtioned concerning the Symbol of *Athanaſius* (for we ſee the *Nicene* Symbol was the Father of many more, ſome twelve or thirteen Symbols in the ſpace of a hundred years) I confeſſe I cannot ſee that moderate ſentence and gentleneſſe of charity in his Preface and Concluſion as there was in the *Nicene* Creed. Nothing there but damnation

Numb. 36.

and perishing everlaſtingly, unleſſe the Article of the Trinity be believed, as it is there with curioſity and minute particularities explaind. Indeed *Athanaſius* had been ſoundly vexed on one ſide, and much cryed up on the other; and therefore it is not ſo much wonder for him to be ſo deſecratory and ſevere in his cenſure; for nothing could more aſcertain his friends to him, and diſrepute his enemies, then the beliefe of that damnatory Appendix; but that does not juſtifie the thing. For the Articles themſelves, I am moſt heartily perſwaded of the truth of them, and yet I dare not ſay all that are not ſo, are irrevocably damnd, becauſe *circa hoc Symbolum*, the Faith of the Apoſtles Creed is intire, and he that believeth and is baptized ſhall be ſaved, that is, he that believeth ſuch a beliefe as is ſufficient diſpoſition to be baptized, that Faith with the Sacrament is ſufficient for heaven. Now the Apoſtles Creed does one; why therefore doe not both intitle us to the promiſe? Beſides, if it were conſidered concerning *Athanaſius* Creed, how many people underſtand it not, how contrary to naturall reaſon it ſeems, how little the * Scripture ſayes of thoſe curioſities of Explication, and how Tradition was not cleare on his ſide for the Article it ſelfe, much leſſe for thoſe formes and minutes (how himſelfe is put to make an answer, and excuſe for the

* Vide Hoſum de author. S. Scrip. l. 3. p. 53. & Gordon. Huntſum. Tom. 1. contr. t. de verbo Dei, cap. 19.

† Vide Gretſer. & Tanner, in colog. Raſiſbon. Eusebium fuiſſe Arianiſm ait Perron. lib. 3. cap. 2 contre le Roy Iaques. Idem ait Originem negaſſe Divinitatem filii & Spir. S. l. 2. c. 7. de Euchar. contra. Dupleſſi. idem cap. 5. obſerv. 4. ait. Irenæum talia dixiſſe quæ qui hodie diceret, pro Ariano reputaretur vide etiam Fiſher. in reſp. ad 9. Quæſt. Iacobi Reg. & Epiphani. in hæreſ. 69.

† Fathers ſpeaking in favour of the *Arians*, at leaſt ſo ſeemingly, that the *Arians* appeald to them for tryall, and the offer was declind) and after all this that the *Nicene* Creed it ſelfe went not ſo farre, neither in Article, nor Anathema nor Explication, it had not been amiſſe if the ſmall judgement had been left to Jeſus Chriſt; for he is appointed Judge of all the World, and he ſhall Judge the peo-

ple righteouſly, for he knowes every truth, the degree of every neceſſity, and all excuſes that doe leſſen, or take away the nature or malice of a crime; all which I think *Athanaſius* though a very good man, did not know ſo well as to warrant ſuch a ſentence. And put caſe the hereſy there condemn'd be damnable, (as it is damnable enough) yet a man may maintain

an opinion that is in it ſelfe damnable, and yet he not knowing it ſo, and being invincibly lead into it may goe to heaven; his opinion ſhall burn, and himſelfe be ſaved. But however, I finde no opinions in Scripture cald damnable, but what are impious in *materia practica*, or directly deſtructive of the Faith or the body of Chriſtianity, ſuch of which S. Peter ſpeaks [*bringing in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them; theſe are the falſe Prophets who out of covetouſneſſe make merchandiſe of you through cozening words.*] Such as theſe are truly heresies, and ſuch as theſe are certainly damnable. But becauſe there are no degrees either of truth or falſhood, every true propoſition being alike true; that an error is more or leſſe damnable, is not told us in Scripture, but is determind by the man and his manners, by circumſtance and accidents; and therefore the cenſure in the Preface and end, are Arguments of his zeal and ſtrength of his perſwaſion; but they are extrinſecall and accidental to the Articles, and might as well have been ſpared. And indeed to me it ſeems very hard to put uncharitableneſſe into the Creed, and ſo to make it become as an Article of Faith, though perhaps this very thing was no Faith of *Athanaſius* who if we may believe *Aquinas*, made this maniſeſtation of Faith, *non per modum Symboli, ſed per modum doctrine*, that is, if I underſtood him right, not with a purpoſe to impoſe it upon others, but with confidence to declare his own belief; and that it was preſcrib'd to others as a Creed, was the act of the Biſhops of *Rome*; ſo he ſaid, nay, poſſibly it was none of his: So ſaid the Patriarch of *C.P.* *Melitus* about one hundred and thirty years ſince, in his Epistle to *John Donza*, *Athanaſio falſo adſcriptum Symbolum cum Pontificum Rom. appendice illi adulteratum, luce lucidius conſeſtamur.* And it is more then probable that he ſaid true, becauſe this Creed was written originally in Latine, which in all reaſon *Athanaſius* did not, and it was tranſlated into Greek, it being apparent that the Latine Copy is but one, but the Greek is various, there being three Editions or Tranſlations rather, expreſſed by *Genebrard, lib. 3. de Trinit.* But in this particular, who liſt, may better ſatiate himſelfe in a diſputation de *Symbolo Athanaſii*, printed at *Wertzburg* 1590 ſuppoſed to be written by *Serrarius* or *Clancherus*.

2 Pet. 2. 19

D. Tho. 22.
q. 1. artic. 1. ad 3.
ſum.

And

Numb. 37.

And yet I muſt obſerve that this Symbol of *Athanaſius*, and that other of *Nice*, offer not at any new Articles; they only pretend to a further Explication of the Articles Apoſtolicall, which is a certain confirmation that they did not believe more Articles to be of belief neceſſary to ſalvation: if they intended theſe further Explications to be as neceſſary as the dogmaticall Articles of the Apoſtles Creed, I know not how to anſwer all that may be objected againſt that; but the advantage that I ſhall gather from their not proceeding to new matters, is laid out ready for me in the words of *Athanaſius*, ſaying of this Creed [*this is the Catholike Faith*] and if his authority bee good, or his ſaying true, or he the Authour, then no man can ſay of any other Article, that it is a part of the Catholike Faith, or that the Catholike Faith can be enlarged beyond the contents of that Symbol; and therefore it is a ſtrange boldneſſe in the Church of *Rome*, firſt to adde twelve new Articles, and then to adde the Appendix of *Athanaſius* to the end of them, *This is the Catholike Faith, without which no man can be ſaved.*

Bulla Pii quart-
ti ſupra forma
juramenti pro-
feſſionis fidei,
in ſin. Conc.
Trident.

Numb. 38.

But ſo great an example of ſo excellent a man, hath been either miſtaken or followed with too much greedineſſe, all the world in factions, all damning one another, each party damned by all the reſt, and there is no diſagreeing in opinion from any man that is in love with his own opinion, but damnation preſently to all that diſagree. A Ceremony and a Rite hath cauſed ſeverall Churches to Excommunicate each other, as in the matter of the Saturday Faſt, and keeping Eaſter. But what the ſpirits of men are when they are exaſperated in a Queſtion and difference of Religion, as they call it, though the thing it ſelfe may be moſt inconfiderable, is very evident in that requeſt of Pope *Innocent* the Third, deſiring of the Greeks (but reaſonably a man would think) that they would not ſo much hate the Roman manner of conſecrating in unleavened bread, as to waſh, and ſcrape, and pare the Altars after a Roman Prieſt had conſecrated. Nothing more furious than a miſtaken zeal, and the actions of a ſcrupulous and abuſed conſcience. When men think every thing to be their Faith and their Religion, commonly they are ſo buſie in triſtes and ſuch impertinencies in which

which the ſcene of their miſtake lies, that they neglect the greater things of the Law, charity, and compliances, and the gentleneſſe of Chriſtian Communion; for this is the great principle of miſchiefe, and yet is not more pernicious then unreaſonable.

For I demand: Can any man ſay and juſtifie that the Apoſtles did deny Communion to any man that believed the Apoſtles Creed, and liv'd a good life? And dare any man taxe that proceeding of remiſſeneſſe, and indifferency in Religion? And ſince our bleſſed Saviour promiſed ſalvation to him that *believeth* (and the Apoſtles when they gave this word the greateſt extent, enlarged it not beyond the borders of the Creed) how can any man warrant the condemning of any man to the flames of Hell that is ready to die in attestation of this Faith, ſo expounded and made explicite by the Apoſtles, and lives accordingly? And to this purpoſe it was excellently ſaid by a wiſe and a pious Prelate, *S. Hilary, Non per difficiles nos Deus ad beatam vitam quaſtiones vocat, &c. In abſoluto nobis & facili eſt aternitas; Jeſum ſuſcitatum à mortuis, per Deum credere, & ipſum eſſe Dominum conſideri, &c.* Theſe are the Articles which we muſt believe, which are the ſufficient and adequate object of that Faith which is required of us in order to Salvation. And therefore it was, that when the Biſhops of *Iſtria* deſerted the Communion of Pope *Pelagius, in cauſa trium Capitulorum*, he gives them an account of his Faith by recitation of the Creed, and by atteſting the four Generall Councils, and is confident upon this that *de fidei firmitate nulla poterit eſſe quaſtio vel ſuſſpicio generari*; let the Apoſtles Creed, eſpecially to explicited, be but ſecured, and all Faith is ſecured; and yet that explication too, was leſſe neceſſary then the Articles themſelves; for the explication was but accidentall but the Articles even before the Explication were accounted a ſufficient inlet to the Kingdome of heaven.

And that there was ſecurity enough, in the ſimple believing the firſt Articles, is very certain amongſt them, and by their Principles who allow of an implicate faith to ſerve moſt perſons to the greateſt purpoſes; for if the Creed did contain in it the whole Faith, and that other Articles were in it implicitly,

Numb. 39.

L. 10. de Trin. ad finem.

Concil. tom. 4. Edit. Pariſ. p. 473.

Numb. 40.

22^x.q.1.2.10.
c²p.

(for ſuch is the doctrine of the Schoole, and particularly of *Aquinas*) then he that expliciteſly believes all the Creed, does impliciteſly believe all the Articles contain'd in it, and then it is better the implication ſhould ſtill continue, then that by any explication (which is ſimply unnecceſſary) the Church ſhould be troubled with queſtions, and uncertain determinations, and factions enkindled, and animoſities ſet on foot, and mens ſoules endanger'd, who before were ſecur'd by the explicite beliefe of all that the Apoſtles requir'd as neceſſary, which beliefe alſo did ſecure them for all the reſt, becauſe it implied the belief of whatſoever was virtually in the firſt Articles, if ſuch beliefe ſhould by chance be neceſſary.

Numb. 41.

The ſumme of this diſcourſe is this, if we take an eſtimate of the nature of Faith from the dictates and promiſes Evangelicall, and from the practice Apoſtolicall, the nature of Faith and its integrity conſiſts in ſuch propoſitions which make the foundation of hope and charity, that which is ſufficient to make us to doe honour to Chriſt, and to obey him, and to encourage us in both; and this is compleated in the Apoſtles Creed. And ſince contraries are of the ſame extent, hereſy is to be judg'd by its proportion and analogy to faith, and that is hereſy only which is againſt Faith. Now becauſe Faith is not only a precept of Doctrines, but of manners and holy life, whatſoever is either oppoſite to an Article of Creed, or teaches ill life, that's hereſy; but all thoſe propoſitions which are extrinſicall to theſe two conſiderations, be they true or be they falſe, make not hereſy, nor the man an Heretick; and therefore however hee may be an erring perſon, yet he is to be uſed accordingly, pittied and inſtructed, not condemned or Excommunicated; And this is the reſult of the firſt ground, the conſideration of the nature of Faith and hereſy.

SECT. III.

Of the difficulty and uncertainty of Arguments from Scripture, in Questions not ſimply neceſſary, not literally determined.

God who diſpoſes of all things ſweetly and according to the nature and capacity of things and perſons, had made thoſe only neceſſary, which he had taken care ſhould be ſufficiently propounded to all perſons of whom he required the explicate belief. And therefore all the Articles of Faith are cleerely and plainly ſet down in Scripture, and the Goſpel is not hid *niſi perentibus* ſaith S. Paul; *ποῦς γὰρ ἀπὸς ἀπαλλοτρίω, ἡ χάρις ἀποδόντος ἡμῶν ἐν ταῖς ἐπιτομαῖς*, ſaith Damascen, and that ſo manifeſtly that no man can be ignorant of the foundation of Faith without his own apparent fault. And this is acknowledged by all wiſe and good men, and is evident, beſides the reaſonableneſſe of the thing, in the testimonies of Saints^a *Auſtin*, ^b *Hierome*, ^c *Chryſoſtome*, ^d *Fulgentius*, ^e *Hugo de Sancto Victore*, ^f *Theodoret*, ^g *Lactantius*, ^h *Theophilus Antiſiochenus*, ⁱ *Aquinas*, and the latter Schoole-men. And God hath done more; for many things which are only profitable, are alſo ſet down ſo plainly, that (as S. *Auſtin* ſayes) *nemo inde haurire non poſſit, ſi modo ad hauriendum devotè ac piè accedat* (*ubi ſupra de util. cred.c.6.*) but of ſuch things there is no Queſtion commenc'd in Chriſtendome, and if there were, it cannot but be a crime and humane intereſt, that are the Authors of ſuch diſputes, and therefore theſe cannot be ſimple errors, but alwayes hereſies, becauſe the principle of them is a perſonall ſinne.

But beſides theſe things which are ſo plainly ſet down, ſome for doctrine as S. *Paul* ſayes, that is, for Articles and foundation of Faith, ſome for inſtruction, ſome for reproofe, ſome for comfort, that is, in matters practicall and ſpeculative of ſeverall tempers and conſtitutions, there are innumerable places containing in them great myſteries, but yet either ſo enwrapped with a cloud, or ſo darkned with umbrages, or heighthened with expreſſions, or ſo covered with allegories and garments of

Numb. 1.

Orthod. fidei. lib. 4. c. 18.

^a Super Pſal. 82. & de util. cred. c. 6.

^b Super Iſa. c. 19 & in Pſal. 86.

^c Homil. 3. in Theſſ. Ep. 2.

^d Scrm. de confeſſ. c. Miſcel. 2. l. 1. tit. 46.

^e In Gen. ap. Struch p. 87.

^g C. 6. c. 21. h Ad Antioch. l. 2. p. 918.

ⁱ Par. 1. q. 1. art. 9

Numb. 2.

Rhetorick, ſo profound in the matter, or ſo altered or made intricate in the manner, in the clothing and in the dreſſing, that God may ſeeme to have left them as tryalls of our induſtry, and Arguments of our imperfections, and incentives to the longings after heaven, and the cleareſt revelations of eternity, and as occasions and opportunities of our mutuall charity and toleration to each other, and humility in our ſelves, rather then the repositories of Faith, and furniture of Creeds, and Articles of beſiefe.

Numb. 3.

For wherever the word of God is kept, whether in Scripture alone, or alſo in Tradition, he that conſiders that the meaning of the one, and the truth or certainty of the other are things of great Queſtion, will ſee a neceſſity in theſe things (which are the ſubject matter of moſt of the Queſtions of Chriſtendome) that men ſhould hope to be excuſed by an implicate faith in God Almighty. For when there are in the Explications of Scripture ſo many Commentaries, ſo many ſenſes and Interpretations, ſo many Volumes in all Ages, and all, like mens faces, exactly none like another, either this difference and inconvenience is abſolutely no fault at all, or if it be, it is excuſable, by a minde prepar'd to conſent in that truth which God intended. And this I call an implicate Faith in God, which is certainly of as great excellency as an implicate Faith in any man or company of men. Becauſe they who doe require an implicate Faith in the Church for Articles leſſe neceſſary, and excuſe the want of explicate Faith by the implicate, doe require an implicate Faith in the Church, becauſe they believe that God hath required of them to have a minde prepared to believe whatever the Church ſayes; which becauſe it is a propoſition of no abſolute certainty, whoſoever does in readineſſe of minde believe all that God ſpake, does alſo believe that ſufficiently, if it be fitting to be believ'd, that is, if it be true, and if God hath ſaid ſo; for he hath the ſame obedience of underſtanding in this as in the other. But becauſe it is not ſo certain God hath tyed him in all things to believe that which is called the Church, and that it is certain we muſt believe God in all things, and yet neither know all that either God hath revealed or the Church taught, it is better to take the certain then the uncertain, to believe

believe God rather than men, eſpecially ſince if God hath bound us to believe men, our abſolute ſubmiſſion to God does involve that, and there is no inconvenience in the world this way, but that we implicitly believe one Article more, *viz.* the Churches Authority or infallibility, which may well be pardoned, becauſe it ſecures our beliefe of all the reſt, and we are ſure if we believe all that God ſaid expliciteſly or impliciteſly, we alſo believe the Church impliciteſly in caſe we are bound to it; but we are not certain, that if we believe any company of men whom we call the Church, that we therefore obey God and believe what he hath ſaid. But however, if this will not help us, there is no help for us, but good fortune or abſolute predeſtination; for by choyce and induſtry, no man can ſecure himſelfe that in all the myſteries of Religion taught in Scripture he ſhall certainly underſtand and expliciteſly believe that ſenſe, that God intended. For to this purpoſe there are many conſiderations.

1. There are ſo many thouſands of Copies that were writ by perſons of ſeveral intereſts and perſuaſions, ſuch different underſtandings and tempers, ſuch diſtinct abilities and weakneſſes, that it is no wonder there is ſo great variety of readings both in the Old Teſtament and in the New. In the Old Teſtament, the Jewes pretend that the Chriſtians have corrupted many places, on purpoſe to make ſymphony between both the Teſtaments. On the other ſide, the Chriſtians have had ſo much reaſon to ſuſpect the Jewes, that when *Aquila* had tranſlated the Bible in their Schooles, and had been taught by them, they rejected the Edition many of them, and ſome of them called it hereſy to follow it. And *Juſtin Martyr* juſtified it to *Tryphon*, that the Jewes had deſalk'd many ſayings from the Books of the old Prophets, and amongſt the reſt, he inſtances in that of the *Pſalm*, *Dicite in nationibus quia Dominus regnavit à ligno*. The laſt words they have cut off, and prevail'd ſo farre in it, that to this day none of our Bibles have it; but if they ought not to have it, then *Juſtin Martyr's* Bible had more in it then it ſhould have, for there it was; ſo that a fault there was either under or over. But however, there are infinite Readings in the New Teſtament (for in that I will inſtance) ſome whole Verſes in one that are not in another, and there was in ſome

Numb. 40.

Copies of S. *Mark's* Gospel in the laſt Chapter a whole verſe, a Chapter it was anciently called, that is not found in our Bibles, as S. *Hierom.* ad *Hedibiam*, q. 3. notes. The words he repeats, *Lib. 2. contra Polygamus. Et illi ſatis faciebant dicentes, ſeculum iſtnd iniquitatis & incredulitatis ſubſtantia eſt, quæ non finit per immundos ſpiritus veram Dei apprehendi virtutem, idcirco jam nunc revela juſtitiam tuam.* Theſe words are thought by ſome, to ſavour of *Manicheiſme*, and for ought I can finde were therefore rejected out of many Greek Copies, and at laſt out of the Latine. Now ſuppoſe that a *Manichee* in diſputation ſhould urge this place, having found it in his Bible, if a Catholike ſhould answer him by ſaying it is Apocryphall, and not found in divers Greek Copies, might not the *Manichee* ask how it came in, if it was not the word of God, and if it was, how came it out? and at laſt take the ſame liberty of rejecting any other Authority which ſhall be alledged againſt him; if he can finde any Copy that may ſavour him, however that ſavour be procured; and did not the *Ebionites* reject all the Epiſtles of S. *Paul* upon pretence he was an enemy to the Law of *Moses*? indeed it was boldly and moſt unreaſonably done; but if one title or one Chapter of S. *Mark* be called Apocryphall, for, being ſuſpected of *Manicheiſme*, it is a plea that will too much juſtify others in their taking and chuſing what they liſt. But I will not urge it ſo farre; but is not there as much reaſon for the fierce *Lutherans* to reject the Epiſtle of S. *James* for favouring juſtification by works, or the Epiſtle to the *Hebrewes*, upon pretence that the ſixth and tenth Chapters doe ſavour *Novatianiſme*; eſpecially ſince it was by ſome famous Churches at firſt not accepted, even by the Church of *Rome* her ſelfe? The Parable of the woman taken in adultery, which is now in *Joh. 8.* *Enſebius* ſayes was not in any Goſpel, but the Goſpel ſecundum *Hebræos*, and S. *Hierom* makes it doubtfull, and ſo does S. *Chryſoſtome* and *Euthimius*, the firſt not vouchſafing to explicate it in Homilies upon S. *John*, the other affirming it not to be found in the exacter Copies. I ſhall not neede to urge that there are ſome words ſo neer in ſound, that the Scribes might eaſily miſtake: There is one famous one of *Κυριε ελεησον*, which yet ſome Copies read

read *καίρω δακρυοῖς*, the ſenſe is very unlike though the words be neer, and there needs ſome little luxation to ſtraine this latter reading to a good ſenſe; That famous precept of S. Paul, that the women muſt pray with a covering on their head *διὰ τῶν ἀγγέλων*, becauſe of the Angels, hath brought into the Church an opinion that Angels are preſent in Churches, and are Spectators of our devotion and deportment. Such an opinion if it ſhould meet with peeviſh opposites on one ſide, and confident Hyperaſiſts on the other, might poſſibly make a Sect, and here were a cleer ground for the affirmative, and yet who knows but that it might have been a miſtake of the Tranſcribers to double the γ? for if it were read *διὰ τῶν ἀγγέλων*, that the ſenſe be, women in publike Aſſemblies muſt weare a vaile, by reaſon of the Companies of the young men there preſent, it would be no ill exchange for the loſſe of a letter, to make ſo probable ſo cleare a ſenſe of the place. But the inſtances in this kinde, are too many, as appears in the variety of readings in ſeverall Copies proceeding from the negligence or ignorance of the Tranſcribers, or the malicious* endeavour of Hereticks, or the infering Marginall Notes into the Text, or the neceſſeſſe of ſeverall words. Indeed there is ſo much evidence of this particular, that it hath encouraged the ſervants of the Vulgar Tranſlation (for ſo ſome are now adayes) to preferre that Tranſlation before the Originall; for although they have attempted ſuch propoſition with very ill ſucceſſe yet that they could think it poſſible to be prov'd, is an Argument there is much variety and alterations in divers Texts; for if they were not, it were impudence to pretend a Tranſlation, and that none of the beſt, ſhould be better then the Originall. But ſo it is that this variety of reading is not of ſlight conſideration; for although it be demonſtrably true, that all things neceſſary to Faith and good manners are preſerv'd from alteration and corruption, becauſe they are of things neceſſary, and they could not be neceſſary, unleſſe they were delivered to us, God in his goodneſſe and his juſtice having oblig'd himſelf to preſerve that which he hath bound us to obſerve and keep; yet in other things which God hath not oblig'd himſelf ſo punctually to preſerve in theſe things ſince variety of reading is crept in, every reading takes

* Græci cor-
ruperunt no-
vum Teſta-
mentum ut te-
ſtatur Tertul.
l. 5. adv. Mar-
cion. Euseb. l. 7.
Hiſt. c. ult. I-
renæ. l. 1. c. 29.
allu. hæreſ. Ba-
ſil. l. 2. contr.
Eunomium.

away a degree of certainty from any propoſition derivative from thoſe places ſo read: And if ſome Copies (eſpecially if they be publike and notable) omit a verſe or title, every argument from ſuch a title or verſe loſes much of its ſtrength and reputation; and we finde it in a great inſtance. For when in probation of the myſtery of the glorious Unity in Trinity, we alledge that ſaying of S. John [*there are three which bear witneſſe in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Spirit, and theſe three are one*:] the *Antitrinitarians* think they have answered the Argument by ſaying the *Syrian* Translation, and divers Greek Copies have not that verſe in them, and therefore being of doubtfull Authority, cannot conclude with certainty in a Queſtion of Faith. And there is an inſtance on the Catholike part. For when the *Arrians* urge the ſaying of our Saviour, [*No man knows that day and houre* (viz. of Judgement) *no not the Sonne, but the Father only*], to prove that the Sonne knows not all things, and therefore cannot be God in the proper ſenſe; S. *Ambroſe* thinks he hath answered the Argument by ſaying, thoſe words [*no not the Sonne*] was thruſt into the Text by the fraud of the *Arrians*. So that here we have one objection, which muſt firſt be cleared and made inſallible, before we can be aſcertain'd in any ſuch Queſtion as to call them Hereticks that diſſent.

Numb. 5.

2. I conſider that there are very many ſenſes and deſigns of expounding Scripture, and when the Grammaticall ſenſe is found out, we are many times never the neerer; it is not that which was intended; for there is in very many Scriptures a double ſenſe, a literall and a Spirituall (for the Scripture is *a Book written within and without* (Apoc. 5.) And both theſe ſenſes are ſub-divided. For the literall ſenſe is either naturall or figurative: And the Spirituall is ſometimes allegoricall, ſometimes anagogicall, nay, ſometimes there are divers literall ſenſes in the ſame ſentence, as S. *Anſelm* excellently proves in divers places, and it appears in divers quotations in the New Teſtament, where the Apoſtles and Divine Writers bring the ſame Teſtimony to divers purpoſes; and particularly, S. *Paul*'s making that ſaying of the Pſalme, *Thou art my Sonne, this day have I begotten thee*, to be an Argument of Chriſts Reſurrection, and

* Lib. 12. conſeſſ. cap. 26.
Lib. 11. de Civit. Dei. c. 19.
Li. 3. de doctrinâ Chriſti. cap. 27.

a designation or ordination to his Pontificate is an inſtance very famous in his 2. and 5. chapter to the *Hebrewes*. But now there being ſuch variety of ſenſes in Scripture, and but few places ſo mark'd out, as not to be capable of divers ſenſes, if men will write Commentaries, as *Herode* made Orations *μερῶς πολλῆς παντασίας*, what inſallible *χρῆσις* will be left whereby to judge of the certain dogmaticall reſolute ſenſe of ſuch places which have been the matter of Queſtion? For put caſe a Queſtion were commenc'd concerning the degrees of glory in heaven, as there is in the Schooles a noted one, To ſhew an inequality of reward, Chriſts Parable is brought of the reward of ten Cities, and of five according to the divers improvement of the Talents; this ſenſe is myſticall, and yet very probable, and underſtood by men for ought I know, to this very ſenſe. And the reſult of the Argument is made good by *S. Paul*, *as one ſtarre differeth from another in glory*; ſo ſhall it be in the reſurrection of the dead. Now ſuppoſe another ſhould take the ſame liberty of Expounding another Parable to a myſticall ſenſe and Interpretation, as all Parables muſt be expounded; then the Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard, and though differing in labour, yet having an equall reward, to any mans underſtanding may ſeem very ſtrongly to prove the contrary, and as if it were of purpoſe, and that it were *primum intentum* of the Parable, the Lord of the Vineyard determin'd the point reſolutely upon the mutiny and repining of them that had born the burthen and heat of the day, *I will give unto this laſt even as to thee*; which to my ſenſe ſeems to determine the Queſtion of degrees; They that work but little, and they that work long, ſhall not be diſtinguiſhed in the reward, though accidentally they were in the work: And if this opinion could but answer *S. Pauls* words, it ſtands as faire, and perhaps fairer then the other. Now if we look well upon the words of *S. Paul*, we ſhall finde he ſpeaks nothing at all of diverſity of degrees of glory in beatiſied bodies, but the differences of glory in bodies heavenly and earthly. *There are* (ſayes he) *bodies earthly, and there are heavenly bodies: And one is the glory of the earthly, another the glory of the heavenly; one glory of the Sun, another of the Moone, &c.* So ſhall it be in the Reſurrection; for it is

ſowne in corruption, it is raiſed in incorruption. Plainly thus, our bodies in the Reſurrection ſhall differ as much from our bodies here in the ſtate of corruption, as one Starre does from another. And now ſuppoſe a Sect ſhould be commended upon this Queſtion (upon lighter and vainer many have been) either ſide muſt reſolve to anſwer the others Arguments, whether they can or no, and to deny to each other a liberty of expounding the parable to ſuch a ſenſe, and yet themſelves muſt uſe it or want an Argument. But men uſe to be unjuſt in their own caſes; And were it not better to leave each other to their liberty, and ſeek to preſerve their own charity? For when the words are capable of a myſticall or a divers ſenſe, I know not why mens fancies or underſtandings ſhould be more bound to be like one another then their faces: And either in all ſuch places of Scripture, a liberty muſt be indulg'd to every honeſt and peaceable wiſe man, or elſe all Argument from ſuch places muſt be wholly declin'd. Now although I inſtanc'd in a Queſtion, which by good fortune never came to open defiance, yet there have been Sects fram'd upon lighter grounds, more inconfiderable Queſtions, which have been diſputed on either ſide with Arguments leſſe materiall and leſſe pertinent. S. *Auſtin* laugh'd at the *Donatiſts*, for bringing that ſaying of the Spouſe in the *Canticles* to prove their Schiſm, *Indica mihi ubi paſcas, ubi cubes in meridie*. For from thence they concluded the reſidence of the Church was only in the South part of the world, only in *Africa*. It was but a weak way of Argument; yet the Fathers were free enough to uſe ſuch mediums, to prove myſteries of great concernment; but yet againe, when they ſpeak either againſt an Adverſary, or with conſideration, they deny that ſuch myſticall ſenſes can ſufficiently confirm a Queſtion of Faith. But I ſhall inſtance in the great Queſtion of Rebaptization of Hereticks, which many Saints, and Martyrs, and Confessors, and divers Councells, and almoſt all *Aſia* and *Africa* did once believe and praſtiſe. Their grounds for the invalidity of the baptiſm by a Heretick, were ſuch myſticall words as theſe, *Oleum peccatoris non impinguet caput meum* *Pſ.* 140. And *Qui baptizatur à mortuo, quid proſicit lavatio ejus?* *Eccl.* 34. And *ab aqua alienâ abſtineſe*, *Prov.* 5. And *Deni peccatores non exaudis*, *Job.* 9.

Hieron. in
Math. 13.

Joh. 9. And he that is not with me is against me, *Luk. 11.* I am not sure the other part had Arguments so good. For the great one of *una fides, unum baptisma*, did not conclude it to their understandings who were of the other opinion, and men famous in their generations; for it was no Argument that they who had been baptized by *Johns* baptism should not be baptized in the name of Jesus, because *unus Deus, unum baptisma*; and as it is still one Faith which a man confesseth severall times, and one Sacrament of the Eucharist, though a man often communicates; so it might be one baptism though often ministr'd. And the unity of baptism might not be deriv'd from the unity of the ministration, but from the unity of the Religion into which they are baptized; though baptized a thousand times, yet because it was still in the name of the holy Trinity, still into the death of Christ, it might be *unum baptisma*. Whether *S. Cyprian, Firmilian*, and their Collegues had this discourse, or no (I know not) I am sure they might have had much better to have evacuated the force of that Argument, although I believe they had the wrong cause in hand. But this is it that I say, that when a Question is so undetermin'd in Scripture, that the Arguments rely only upon such mysticall places, whence the best fancies can draw the greatest variety, and such which perhaps were never intended by the holy Ghost, it were good the rivers did not swell higher then the fountaine, and the confidence higher then the Argument and evidence; for in this case there could not any thing be so certainly proved, as that the disagreeing party should deserve to be condemn'd by a sentence of Excommunication for disbelieving it, and yet they were; which I wonder at so much the more, because they (who as it was since judg'd) had the right cause, had not any sufficient Argument from Scripture, nor so much as such mysticall Arguments, but did fly to the Tradition of the Church, in which also I shall afterward shew, they had nothing that was absolutely certaine.

3. I consider that there are divers places of Scripture containing in them mysteries and Questions of great concernment, and yet the fabrick and constitution is such, that there is no certain mark to determine whether the sense of them should

Numb. 6.

be literall or figurative; I ſpeak not here concerning extrinſecall meanes of determination, as traditive Interpretation Councils, Fathers, Popes, and the like; I ſhall conſider them afterward in their ſeverall places; but here the ſubject matter being concerning Scripture in its own capacity, I ſay there is nothing in the nature of the thing to determine the ſenſe and meaning, but it muſt be gotten out as it can; and that therefore it is unreaſonable, that what of it ſelfe is ambiguous ſhould be underſtood in its own prime ſenſe and intention, under the paine of either a ſinne or an Anathema; I inſtance in that famous place from whence hath ſprung that Queſtion of Tranſubſtantiation, *Hoc eſt corpus meum*. The words are plain and clear, apt to be underſtood in the literall ſenſe and yet this ſenſe is ſo hard as it does violence to reaſon, and therefore it is the Queſtion whether or no it be not a figurative ſpeech. But here what ſhall we have to determine it? What mean ſoever we take, and to what ſenſe ſoever you will expound it, you ſhall be put, to give an account why you expound other places of Scripture in the ſame caſe to quite contrary ſenſes. For if you expound it literally, then beſides that it ſeems to intrench upon the words of our bleſſed Saviour, *The words that I ſpeak they are Spirit and they are life*, that is, to be ſpiritually underſtood (and it is a miſerable thing to ſee what wretched ſhifts are uſed to reconcile the literall ſenſe to theſe words, and yet to diſtinguiſh it from the Capernaiticall fancy) but beſides this, why are not thoſe other ſayings of Chriſt expounded literally, *I am a Vine*, *I am the Doore*, *I am a Rock* &c. Why doe we flie to a figure in thoſe parallel words? *This is the Covenant which I make between me and you*; and yet that Covenant was but the ſign of the Covenant; and why doe we flie to a figure in a precept, as well as in myſtery and a propoſition? *If thy right hand offend thee cut it off*; and yet we have figures enough to ſave a limb. If it be ſaid becauſe reaſon tells us theſe are not to be expounded according to the letter; This will be no plea for them who retain the literall expoſition of the other inſtance againſt all reaſon, againſt all Philoſophy, againſt all ſenſe, and againſt two or three ſciences. But if you expound theſe words figuratively, beſides that you are to conteſt againſt

a world of prejudices. you give your ſelfe the liberty, which if others will uſe when either they have a reaſon or a neceſſity ſo to doe, they may perhaps turn all into Allegory, and ſo may evacuate any precept, and elude any Argument. Well, ſo it is that very wiſe men have expounded things * Allegorically, when they ſhould have expounded them literally. So did the famous *Origen*, who as *S. Hierom* reports of him, turned *Paradiſe* ſo into an Allegory, that he took away quite the truth of the Story, and not only *Adam* was turned out of the Garden, but the Garden it ſelfe out of *Paradiſe*. Others expound things literally when they ſhould underſtand them in Allegory; ſo did the Ancient *Papias* underſtand (*Apocal. 20.*) Chriſts Millenary reign upon earth, and ſo, depreſſed the hopes of Chriſtianity and their deſires to the longing and expectation of temporal pleaſures and ſatiſfactions, and he was followed by *Juſtin Martyr*, *Irenaus*, *Tertullian*, *Lactantius*, and indeed the whole Church generally till *S. Auſtin* and *S. Hierom*'s time who firſt of any whoſe works are extant did reprove the error. If ſuch great ſpirits be deceiv'd in finding out what kinde of ſenſes be to be given to Scriptures, it may well be endur'd that we who ſit at their feet, may alſo tread in the ſteps of them whoſe feet could not alwayes tread aright.

4. I conſider that there are ſome places of Scripture that have the ſelfe ſame expreſſions, the ſame preceptive words, the ſame reaſon and account in all appearance, and yet either muſt be expounded to quite different ſenſes, or elſe we muſt renounce the Communion, and the charities of a great part of Chriſtendom. And yet there is abſolutely nothing in the thing or in its circumſtances, or in its adjuncts that can determine it to different purpoſes. I inſtance in thoſe great excluſive negatives for the neceſſity of both Sacraments. *Niſi quis renatus fuerit ex aqua &c.* *Niſi manducaveritis carnem filii hominis, &c.* a non introibit in regnum caelorum for both theſe. Now then the firſt is urg'd for the abſolute indiſpenſable neceſſity of baptiſm even in Infants, inſomuch that Infants goe to part of Hell if (inculpably both on their own and their Parents part) they miſe of baptiſm, for that is the doctrine of the Church of *Rome*, which they learnt from *S. Auſtin*, and others alſo

* Sic *S. Hieron.*
In adoleſcentiâ
provocatus ar-
dere & ſtudio
Scripturarum
allegoricè in-
terpretatus ſum
Abdiam Pro-
phetam, cujus
hiſtoriam ne-
ſciebam. De
ſenſu Allegorico
S. Script. dixit
Baſilius, ως κε-
νομεν δμῶρον
μὲν ἡ λογικὴ
προλεχόμενα,
ἀλλ' οὐ ὅτι ἰστορε-
ῖται δὲ δόγμα-
τον.
L. 29. de Civit.
Dei, c. 7. præ-
ſat. l. 19. in
Iſai, & in c. 36.
Ezek.
Numb. 7.

doe from hence baptize Infants, though with a leſſe opinion of its absolute neceſſity. And yet the ſame manner of precept in the ſame forme of words, in the ſame manner of threatening, by an exclusive negative, ſhall not enjoin us to communicate Infants, though damnation (at leaſt in forme of words) be exactly and *per omnia* alike appendant to the neglect of holy Baptiſm and the venerable Eucharift. If [*niſi quis renatus*] ſhall conclude againſt the Anabaptiſt, for neceſſity of baptizing Infants (as ſure enough we ſay, it doe) why ſhall not an equall [*niſi comederitis*] bring Infants to the holy Communion? The Primitive Church for ſome two whole Ages did follow their own principles, where ever they lead them; and ſeeing that upon the ſame ground equall reſults muſt follow, they did Communicate Infants as ſoon as they had baptized them. And why the Church of *Rome* ſhould not doe ſo too, being the expounds [*niſi comederitis*] of orall manducation, I cannot yet learn a reaſon. And for others that expound it of a ſpirituall manducation, why they ſhall not allow the diſagreeing part the ſame liberty of expounding [*niſi quis renatus*] too, I by no meanes can underſtand. And in theſe caſes no externall determiner can bee pretended in anſwer. For whatſoever is extrinſecall to the words, as Councils, Tradition, Church Authority, and Fathers, either have ſaid nothing at all, or have concluded by their praſiſe contrary to the preſent opinion, as is plaine in their communicating Infants by vertue of [*niſi comederitis*.]

Numb. 8.

5. I ſhall not need to urge the myſteriouſneſſe of ſome points in Scripture, which *ex natura rei* are hard to be underſtood though very plainly repreſented. For there are ſome *ſecreta Theologie*, which are only to be underſtood by perſons very holy and ſpirituall, which are rather to be felt then diſcourſed of, and therefore if peradventure they be offered to publike conſideration, they will therefore be oppoſed becauſe they runne the ſame fortune with many other Queſtions, that is, not to be underſtood, and ſo much the rather becauſe their underſtanding, that is, the feeling ſuch ſecrets of the Kingdome, are not the reſults of Logick and Philoſophy, nor yet of publike revelation, but of the publike ſpirit privately working,
and

and in no man is a duty. but in all that have it, is a reward, and is not neceſſary for all, but given to ſome, producing its operations, not regularly, but upon occaſions, perſonall neceſſities and new emergencies. Of this nature are the ſpirit of obſignation, beliefe of particular ſalvation, ſpeciall influences and comforts comming from a ſenſe of the ſpirit of adoption, a ſtall fervours and great complacencies in devotion, ſpiritual joyes, which are little drawings aſide of the curtaines of peace and eternity; and antepaſts of immortality. But the not underſtanding the perfect conſtitution and temper of theſe myſteries (and it is hard for any man ſo to underſtand, as to make others doe ſo too that ſeele them not) is cauſe that in many Queſtions of ſecret Theology, by being very apt and eaſy to be miſtaken, there is a neceſſity in forbearing one another; and this conſideration would have been of good uſe in the Queſtion between *Soto* and *Catharinus*, both for the preſervation of their charity and explication of the myſtery.

6. But here it will not be unſeaſonable to conſider, that all ſystems and principles of ſcience are expreſſed ſo that either by reaſon of the Univerſality of the termes and ſubject matter or the infinite variety of humane underſtandings, and theſe peradventure ſwayed by intereſt, or determin'd by things accidentall and extrinſecall, they ſeem to divers men, nay to the ſame men upon divers occaſions to ſpeak things extremly diſparate and ſometimes contrary, but very often of great variety. And this very thing happens alſo in Scripture; that if it were not in *re ſacrâ & ſeriâ*, it were excellent ſport to obſerve how the ſame place of Scripture ſerves ſeverall turns upon occaſion, and they at that time believe the words ſound nothing elſe, whereas in the liberty of their judgement and abſtracting from that occaſion, their Commentaries underſtand them wholly to a differing ſenſe. It is a wonder of what excellent uſe to the Church of *Rome*, is [*tibi dabo claves*:] It was ſpoken to *Peter* and none elſe (ſometimes) and therefore it concerns him and his Succeſſors only; the reſt are to derive from him. And yet if you Queſtion them for their Sacrament of Penance, and Prieltly Abſolution, then *tibi dabo claves* comes in, and that was ſpoken to *S. Peter*, and in him to the whole Colledge of the Apoſtles, and

and in them to the whole Hierarchy. If you queſtion why the Pope pretends to free ſoules from Purgatory, *tibi dabo claves* is his warrant; but if you tell him the Keyes are only for binding and looſing on Earth directly, and in Heaven conſequently; and that Purgatory is a part of Hell, or rather neither Earth nor Heaven nor Hell, and ſo the Keyes ſeem to have nothing to doe with it, then his Commiſſion is to be enlarged by a ſuppletory of reaſon and conſequences, and his Keyes ſhall unlock this difficulty; for it is *clavis ſcientiæ* as well as *authoritatis*. And theſe Keyes ſhall enable him to expound Scriptures infallibly, to determine Queſtions, to preſide in Councils, to dictate to all the World Magiſterially, to rule the Church, to diſpence with Oaths, to abrogate Lawes: And if his Key of knowledge will not, the Key of Authority ſhall, and *tibi dabo claves* ſhall answer for all. We have an inſtance in the ſingle fancy of one man, what rare variety of matter is afforded from thoſe plain words of [*Oravi pro te Petre*] Luk. 22. for that place ſayes Bellarmine, is otherwiſe to be underſtood of Peter, otherwiſe of the Popes, and otherwiſe of the Church of Rome. And [*pro te*] ſignifies that Chriſt prayed that Peter might neither erre perſonally nor judicially, and that Peters Succeſſors if they did erre perſonally, might not erre judicially, and that the Roman Church might not erre perſonally. All this variety of ſenſe is pretended by the fancy of one man, to be in a few words which are as plain and ſimple as are any words in Scripture. And what then in thoſe thouſands that are intricate? So is done with *paſce oves*, which a man would think were a commiſſion as innocent and guiltleſſe of deſigns, as the ſheep in the folds are. But if it be asked why the Biſhop of Rome calls himſelfe Univerſall Biſhop, *paſce oves* is his warrant? Why he pretends to a power of depoſing Princes, *Paſce oves*, ſaid Chriſt to Peter, the ſecond time. If it be demanded why alſo he pretends to a power of authorizing his ſubjects to kill him, *Paſce agnos* ſaid Chriſt the third time: And *paſce* is *dare*, and *paſce* is *Impera*, and *paſce* is *occide*. Now if others ſhould take the ſame (unreaſonableſſe I will not ſay, but the ſame) liberty in expounding Scripture, or if it be not licence taken, but that the Scripture it ſelfe is ſo full and redundant in ſenſes quite contrary, what man

Bellar. lib. 1.
de Pontif. c. 3.
ſpondeo
primò.

man ſoever, or what company of men ſoever ſhall uſe this principle, will certainly finde ſuch rare productions from ſeverall places, that either the unreaſonableneſſe of the thing will diſcover the errour of the proceeding, or elſe there will be a neceſſity of permitting a great liberty of judgement, where is ſo infinite variety without limit or mark of neceſſary determination. If the firſt, then becauſe an errour is ſo obvious and ready to our ſelves, it will be great imprudence or tyranny to be haſty in judging others; but if the latter, it is it that I contend for for it is moſt unreaſonable, when either the thing it ſelle miniſters variety, or that we take licence to our ſelves in variety of interpretations, or proclaime to all the world our great weakneſſe, by our actually being deceived, that we ſhould either preſcribe to others magiſterially when we are in errour, or limit their underſtandings when the thing it ſelle affords liberty and variety.

SECT. IV.

Of the difficulty of Expounding Scripture.

THeſe conſiderations are taken from the nature of Scripture it ſelfe; but then if we conſider that we have no certain wayes of determining places of difficulty and Queſtion, infallibly and certainly, but that we muſt hope to be lay'd in the belief of things plaine, neceſſary and fundamentall, and our pious endeavour to finde out Gods meaning in ſuch places which he hath left under a cloud for other great ends reſerved to his own knowledge, we ſhall ſee a very great neceſſity in allowing a liberty in Propheſying without preſcribing authoritatively to other mens conſciences, and becoming Lords and Maſters of their Faith. Now the meanes of expounding Scripture are either externall, or internall. For the externall, as Church Authority, Tradition, Fathers, Councils and Decrees of Biſhops, they are of a diſtinct conſideration, and follow after in their order. But here we will firſt conſider the invalidity and uncertainty of all thoſe meanes of expounding

Numb. 1.

Scripture which are more proper and internal to the nature of the thing. The great Maſters of Commentaries, ſome whereof have undertaken to know all myſteries, have propounded many wayes to expound Scripture, which indeed are excellent helps, but not infallible aſſiſtances, both becauſe themſelves are but morall instruments which force not truth *ex abſcondito*, as alſo becauſe they are not infallibly uſed and applyed. 1. Sometime the ſenſe is drawn forth by the context and connexion of parts: It is well when it can be ſo. But when there is two or three antecedents, and ſubjects ſpoken of, what man or what rule ſhall aſcertain me that I make my reference true by drawing the relation to ſuch an antecedent; to which I have a minde to apply it, another hath not. For in a contexture where one part does not alwayes depend upon another, Where things of differing natures intervene and interrupt the firſt intentions, there it is not alwayes very probable to expound Scripture, take its meaning by its proportion to the neighbouring words. But who deſires ſatisfaction in this, may read the obſervation verified in S. Gregory's moralls upon *Job*, lib. 5. c. 29. and the inſtances he there brings are excellent prooſe, that this way of Interpretation does not warrant any man to impoſe his Expositions upon the beliefe and underſtanding of other men too confidently and magiſterially.

Numb. 2.

2. Another great pretence of medium is the conference of places, which *Illyricus* calls *ingens remedium & feliciffimam expoſitionem ſanctæ ſcripturæ*; and indeed to it is it well and temperately uſed; but then we are beholding to them that doe ſo; for there is no rule that can conſtrain them to it; for comparing of places is of ſo indefinite capacity, that if there be ambiguity of words, variety of ſenſe, alteration of circumſtances, or difference of ſtile amongſt Divine Writers, then there is nothing that may be more abuſed by wiſfull people, or may more eaſily deceive the unwary, or that may amuſe the moſt intelligent Obſerver. The Anabaptiſts take advantage enough in this proceeding, (and indeed ſo may any one that liſt) and when we pretend againſt them the neceſſity of baptizing all, by authority of *niſi quis renatus fuerit ex aqua & ſpiritu*, they have a parallel for it, and tell us that Chriſt will

will baptize us with the holy Ghost and with fire, and that one place expounds the other; and because by fire is not meant an Element or any thing that is naturall, but an Allegory and figurative expreſſion of the ſame thing; ſo alſo by water may be meant the figure ſignifying the effect or manner of operation of the holy Spirit. Fire in one place, and water in the other, doe but repreſent to us that Chriſts baptiſm is nothing elſe but the cleaſing and purifying us by the holy Ghost; But that which I here note as of greateſt concernment, and which in all reaſon ought to be an utter overthrow to this topique, is an univerſall abuſe of it among thoſe that uſe it moſt, and when two places ſeem to have the ſame expreſſion, or if a word have a double ſignification, becauſe in this place it may have ſuch a ſenſe, therefore it muſt, becauſe in one of the places the ſenſe is to their purpoſe, they conclude that therefore it muſt be ſo in the other too. An inſtance I give in the great Queſtion between the *Sacnians* and the *Catholikes*. If any place be urg'd in which our bleſſed Saviour is called God, they ſhew you two or three where the word God is taken in a depreſſed ſenſe, for a *quasi Deus*, as when God ſaid to *Moses*, *Conſtitui te Deum Pharaonis*; and hence they argue, becauſe I can ſhew the word is uſed for a *Deus factus*, therefore no Argument is ſufficient to prove Chriſt to be *Deus verus* from the appellative of *Deus*. And might not another argue to the exact contrary, and as well urge that *Moses* is *Deus verus*, becauſe in ſome places the word *Deus* is uſed *pro Deo aeterno*: Both wayes the Argument concludes impiouſly and unreaſonably. It is a fallacy *a poſſe ad eſſe affirmatvè*; becauſe breaking of bread is ſometimes uſed for an Eucharifticall manducation in Scripture; therefore I ſhall not from any teſtimony of Scripture, affirming the firſt Chriſtians to have broken bread together, conclude that they liv'd hoſpitably and in common ſociety. Becauſe it may poſſibly be eluded, therefore it does not ſignifie any thing. And this is the great way of anſwering all the Arguments that can be brought againſt any thing that any man hath a mind to defend; and any man that reads any controversies of any ſide, ſhall finde as many inſtances of this vanity almoſt as he finds Arguments from Scrip-

De doctri.
Christian.
lib.3.

Numb. 3.

ture; this fault was of old noted by *S. Auſtin*, for then they had got the trick, and he is angry at it, *neq; enim putare debemus eſſe præſcriptum, ut quod in aliquo loco res aliqua per ſimilitudinem ſignificaverit, hoc etiam ſemper ſignificare credamus.*

3. Oftentimes Scriptures are pretended to be expounded by a proportion and Analogy of reaſon. And this is as the other, if it be well, its well. But unleſſe there were ſome *intellectus univerſalis* furniſhed with infallible propoſitions, by referring to which every man might argue infallibly; this Logick may deceive as well as any of the reſt. For it is with reaſon as with mens taſtes; although there are ſome generall principles which are reaſonable to all men, yet every man is not able to draw out all its conſequences, nor to underſtand them when they are drawn forth, nor to believe when he does underſtand them. There is a precept of *S. Paul* directed to the *Thſſalonians* before they were gather'd into a body of a Church, *2 Thſ. 3. 6. To withdraw from every brother that walketh disorderly.* But if this precept were now obſerved, I would faine know whether we ſhould not fall into that inconvenience which *S. Paul* ſought to avoyd in giving the ſame commandement to the Church of *Corinth*, *1 Cor. 5. 9. I wrote to you that yee ſhould not company with fornicators; And yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, for then yee muſt goe out of the world:* And therefore he reſtrains it to a quitting the ſociety of Chriſtians living ill lives. But now that all the world hath been Chriſtians, if we ſhould ſin in keeping company with vicious Chriſtians, muſt we not alſo goe out of this world? Is not the precept made null, becauſe the reaſon is altered, and things are come about, and that the *ἀδελφοί* are the brethren *ἀδελφοὶ ὁνόμαζόμενοι* called brethren, as *S. Pauls* phraſe is? And yet either this never was conſidered, or not yet believed; for it is generally taken to be obligatory, though (I think) ſeldome practiſed. But when we come to expound Scriptures to a certaine ſenſe by Arguments drawn from prudentiall motives, then we are in a vaſt plain without any ſufficient guide, and we ſhall have ſo many ſenſes, as there are humane prudences. But that which goes further than this, is a parity of reaſon from a plain place of Scripture to an obſcure, from that which is plainly ſet down in a Text

to another that is more remote from it. And thus is that place in *S. Matthew* forced, *If thy brother refuse to be amended, Dic ecclesia.* Hence some of the Roman Doctors argue, If Christ commands to tell the Church in case of adultery or private injury, then much more in case of heresy. Well, suppose this to be a good Interpretation; Why must I stay here? Why may not I also adde by a parity of reason, If the Church must be told of heresy, much more of treason: And why may not I reduce all finnes to the cognizance of a Church tribunall, as some men doe indirectly, and *Snecanus* does heartily and plainly? If a mans principles be good, and his deductions certain, he need not care whether they carry him. But when an Authority is intrusted to a person, and the extent of his power expressed in his commission, it will not be safety to meddle beyond his commission upon confidence of a parity of reason. To instance once more; When Christ in *pasce oves & tu es Petrus*, gave power to the Pope to govern the Church (for to that sense the Church of *Rome* expounds those Authorities) by a certain consequence of reason, say they, he gave all things necessary for exercise of this jurisdiction, and therefore in *pasce oves*] he gave him an indirect power over temporalls, for that is necessary that he may doe his duty: Well, having gone thus farre, we will goe further upon the parity of reason, therefore he hath given the Pope the gift of tongues; and he hath given him power to give it; for how else shall *Xavier* convert the *Indians*? He hath given him also power to command the Seas and the winds, that they should obey him, for this also is very necessary in some cases. And so *pasce oves* is *accipe donum linguarum*, and *Impera ventis, & dispone regum diademata; & laicorum pradia*, and *influentias celi* too, and whatsoever the parity of reason will judge equally necessary in order to *pasce oves*; when a man does speak reason, it is but reason he should be heard; but though he may have the good fortune, or the great abilities to doe it, yet he hath not a certainty, no regular infallible assistance, no inspiration of Arguments and deductions; and if he had, yet because it must be reason that must judge of reason, unlesse other mens understandings were of the same ayre, the same constitution and ability, they cannot be

preſcrib'd unto, by another mans reaſon; eſpecially becauſe ſuch reaſonings as uſually are in explication of particular places of Scripture, depend upon minute circumſtances and particularities, in which it is ſo eaſy to be deceived, and ſo hard to ſpeak reaſon regularly and alwayes, that it is the greater wonder if we be not deceived.

Numb. 4.

4. Others pretend to expound Scripture by the analogy of Faith, and that is the moſt ſure and infallible way (as it is thought:) But upon ſtricter ſurvey it is but a Chimera, a thing in *nubibus* which varies like the right hand and left hand of a Pillar, and at the beſt is but like the Coaſt of a Country to a Traveller out of his way; It may bring him to his journeyes end though twenty mile about; it may keep him from running into the Sea, and from miſtaking a river for dry land; but whether this little path or the other be the right way it tells not. So is the analogy of Faith, that is, if I underſtand it right, the rule of Faith, that is the Creed. Now were it not a fine device to goe to expound all the Scripture by the Creed, there being in it ſo many thouſand places which have no more relation to any Article in the Creed, then they have to *Tiſyre in patula*? Indeed if a man reſolves to keep the analogy of Faith, that is to expound Scripture, ſo as not to doe any violence to any fundamentall Article, he ſhall be ſure however he erres, yet not to deſtroy Faith, he ſhall not periſh in his Expoſition. And that was the precept given by *S. Paul*, that all Propheſying ſhould be eſtimated κατ' ἀναλογίαν πίſτος, *Rom. 6. 12.* and to this very purpoſe, *S. Auſtin* in his Expoſition of *Geneſis*, by way of Preface ſets down the Articles of Faith, with this deſign and proteſtation of it, that if he ſayes nothing againſt thoſe Articles, though he miſſe the particular ſenſe of the place, there is no danger, or ſinne in his Expoſition; but how that analogy of Faith ſhould have any other influence in expounding ſuch places in which thoſe Articles of Faith are neither expreſſed, nor involv'd, I underſtand not. But then if you extend the analogy of Faith further then that which is proper to the rule or Symbol of Faith, then every man expounds Scripture according to the analogy of Faith; but what? His own Faith: which Faith if it be queſtioned, I am no more

more bound to expound according to the analogy of another mans Faith, then he to expound according to the analogy of mine. And this is it that is complain'd on of all ſides that overvalue their own opinions. Scripture ſeems ſo clearly to ſpeak what they believe, that they wonder all the world does not ſee it as clear as they doe; but they ſatisfie themſelves with ſaying that it is becauſe they come with prejudice, whereas if they had the true beleeſe, that is, theirs, they would eaſily ſee what they ſee. And this is very true : For if they did believe as others believe, they would expound Scriptures to their ſenie; but if this be expounding according to the analogy of Faith, it ſignifies no more then this, Be you of my mind and then my Arguments will ſeem concluding, and my Authorities and Allegations preſſing and pertinent : And this will ſerve on all ſides, and therefore will doe but little ſervice to the determination of Queſtions, or preſcribing to other mens conſciences on any ſide.

Laſtly, Conſulting the Originals is thought a great matter to Interpretation of Scriptures. But this is to ſmall purpoſe : *Numb. 5.* For indeed it will expound the Hebrew and the Greek, and rectifie Tranſlations. But I know no man that ſayes that the Scriptures in Hebrew and Greek are eaſie and certaine to be underſtood, and that they are hard in Latine and Engliſh : The difficulty is in the thing however it be expreſſed, the leaſt is in the language. If the Originall Languages were our mother tongue, Scripture is not much the eaſier to us; and a naturall Greek or a Jew, can with no more reaſon, nor authority obtuſe his Interpretations upon other mens conſciences, then a man of another Nation. Adde to this that the inſpection of the Originall, is no more certain way of Interpretation of Scripture now then it was to the Fathers and Primitive Ages of the Church; and yet he that obſerves what infinite variety of Tranſlations of the Bible were in the firſt Ages of the Church (as *S. Hierom* obſerves) and never a one like another; will think that we ſhall diſſer as much in our Interpretations as they did, and that the medium is as uncertain to us as it was to them; and ſo it is; witneſſe the great number of late Tranſlations, and the infinite number of Commentaries, which

which are too pregnant an Argument that wee neither agree in the underſtanding of the words nor of the ſenſe.

Numb. 6.

The truth is, all theſe wayes of Interpreting of Scripture which of themſelves are good helps, are made either by deſign, or by our infirmities, wayes of intricating and involving Scriptures in greater difficulty, becauſe men doe not learn their doctrines from Scripture, but come to the underſtanding of Scripture with preconceptions and ideas of doctrines of their own, and then no wonder that Scriptures look like Pictures, wherein every man in the roome believes they look on him only, and that whereſoever he ſtands, or how often ſoever he changes his ſtation. So that now what was intended for a remedy, becomes the promotor of our diſeaſe, and our meat becomes the matter of ſickneſſes : And the miſchiefe is, the wit of man cannot find a remedy for it; for there is no rule, no limit, no certain principle, by which all men may be guided to a certain and ſo intallible an Interpretation, that he can with any equity preſcribe to others to believe his Interpretations in places of controverſy or ambiguity. A man would think that the memorable Propheſy of *Jacob*, that the Scepter ſhould not depart from *Judah* till *Shiloh* come, ſhould have been ſo clear a determination of the time of the *Meſſias*, that a Jew ſhould never have doubted it to have been verified in *Jeſus of Nazareth*; and yet for this ſo clear vaticination, they have no leſſe then twenty ſix Answers. *S. Paul* and *S. James* ſeem to ſpeak a little diverſly concerning Juſtification by Faith and Works, and yet to my underſtanding it is very eaſy to reconcile them : but all men are not of my mind; for *Oſiander* in his confutation of the book which *Melanchton* wrote againſt him, obſerves, that there are twenty ſeverall opinions concerning Juſtification, all drawn from the Scriptures, by the men only of the *Auguſtine* Confeſſion. There are ſixteen ſeverall opinions concerning originall ſinne; and as many definitions of the Sacraments as there are Sects of men that diſagree about them.

Numb. 7.

And now what help is there for us in the miſt of theſe uncertainties? If we follow any one Tranſlation, or any one mans Commentary, what rule ſhall we have to chuſe the right by?

by ? or is there any one man, that hath tranſlated perfectly, or expounded infallibly? No Tranſlation challenges ſuch a prerogative as to be authentick, but the Vulgar Latine; and yet ſee with what good ſucceſſe: For when it was declared authentick by the Councell of *Trent*, *Sixtus* put forth a Copy much mended of what it was, and tyed all men to follow that; but that did not ſatisfie; for Pope *Clement* reviews and corrects it in many places, and ſtill the Decree remaines in a changed ſubject. And ſecondly, that Tranſlation will be very unapt to ſatisfie, in which one of their own men *Iſidore Clarius* a Monk of *Breſcia*, found and mended eight thouſand faults, beſides innumerable others which he ſayes he pretermitted. And then thirdly, to ſhew how little themſelves were ſatisfied with it, divers learned men amongſt them did new tranſlate the Bible, and thought they did God and the Church good ſervice in it. So that if you take this for your precedent, you are ſure to be miſtaken infinitely: If you take any other, the Authors themſelves doe not promiſe you any ſecurity. If you reſolve to follow any one as farre only as you ſee cauſe, then you only doe wrong or right by chance; for you have certainty juſt proportionable to your own ſkill, to your own infallibility. If you reſolve to follow any one, whether ſoever he leads, we ſhall oftentimes come thither, where we ſhall ſee our ſelves become ridiculous, as it happened in the caſe of *Spiridion* Biſhop of *Cyprus*, who ſo reſolv'd to follow his old book, that when an eloquent Biſhop who was deſired to Preach, read his Text, *Tu autem tolle cubile tuum & ambula*; *Spiridion* was very angry with him, becauſe in his book it was *tolle lectulum tuum*, and thought it arrogance in the preacher to ſpeak better Latine then his Tranſlatour had done: And if it be thus in Tranſlations, it is farre worſe in Expositions: [*Quia ſcil. Scripturam ſacram pro ipſa ſui altitudine non uno eodemq; ſenſu omnes accipiunt, ut penè quot homines tot illic ſententia erui poſſe videantur*, ſaid *Vincent. Lirinensis*] in which every man knows what innumerable wayes there are of being miſtaken, God having in things not ſimply neceſſary left ſuch a difficulty upon thoſe parts of Scripture which are the ſubject matters of controverſy *ad edomandam labore ſuperbiam, & intellectum a*
L
faſtidio

Libert. de doct.
Chriſt. n. c. 6.

faſtidio revocandum (as S. Auſtin gives a reaſon) that all that erre honeſtly, are therefore to be pityed, and tolerated, becauſe it is or may be the condition of every man at one time or other.

Numb. 8.

The ſumme is this: Since holy Scripture is the repository of divine truths, and the great rule of Faith, to which all Sects of Chriſtians doe appeale for probation of their ſeverall opinions, and ſince all agree in the Articles of the Creed as things clearly and plainly ſet down, and as containing all that which is of ſimple and prime neceſſity; and ſince on the other ſide there are in Scripture many other myſteries, and matters of Queſtion upon which there is a vaile; ſince there are ſo many Copies with infinite varieties of reading; ſince a various Interpunction, a parenthesis, a letter, an accent may much alter the ſenſe; ſince ſome places have divers literall ſenſes, many have ſpiritual, myſtical and Allegoricall meanings; ſince there are ſo many tropes, metonymies, ironies, hyperboles, proprieties and improprieties of language, whoſe underſtanding depends upon ſuch circumſtances that it is almoſt impoſſible to know its proper Interpretation; now that the knowledge of ſuch circumſtances and particular ſtories is irrevocably loſt: ſince there are ſome myſteries which at the beſt advantage of expreſſion, are not eaſy to be apprehended, and whoſe explication, by reaſon of our imperfections, muſt needs be dark, ſometimes weak, ſometimes unintelligible: and laſtly, ſince thoſe ordinary meanes of expounding Scripture, as ſearching the Originalls, conference of places, parity of reaſon, and analogy of Faith, are all dubious, uncertain, and very fallible, he that is the wiſeſt and by conſequence the likeliſt to expound trueſt in all probability of reaſon, will be very farre from confidence, becauſe every one of theſe and many more are like ſo many degrees of improbability and uncertainty, all depressing our certainty of finding out truth in ſuch myſteries and amidſt ſo many difficulties. And therefore a wiſe man that conſiders this, would not willingly be preſcrib'd to by others; and therefore if he alſo be a juſt man, he will not impoſe upon others; for it is beſt every man ſhould be left in that liberty from which no man can juſtly take him, unleſſe he could ſecure him from error: So that here alſo there is a neceſſity

necceſſity to conſerve the liberty of Propheſying, and Interpreting Scripture; a necceſſity deriv'd from the conſideration of the difficulty of Scripture in Queſtions controverted, and the uncertainty of any internal medium, of Interpretation.

SECT. V.

Of the inſufficiency and uncertainty of Tradition to Expoſt Scripture, or determine Queſtions.

IN the next place, we muſt conſider thoſe extrinſecall means of Interpreting Scripture, and determining Queſtions, which they moſt of all conſide in that reſtraine Propheſying with the greateſt Tyranny. The firſt and principall is Tradition, which is pretended not only to expoſt Scripture (*Necceſſe enim eſt propter ſantos tam varii erroris anſraſtus, ut Propheſica & Apoſtolica interpretationis linea ſecundum Eccleſiaſtici & Catholici ſenſus normam dirigatur:*) but alſo to propound Articles upon a diſtinct ſtock, ſuch Articles whereof there is no mention and propoſition in Scripture. And in this topick, not only the diſtinct Articles are clear and plain, like as the fundamentals of Faith expreſſed in Scripture, but alſo it pretends to expoſt Scripture, and to determine Queſtions with ſo much clarity and certainty, as there ſhall neither be error nor doubt remaining, and therefore no diſagreeing is here to be endured. And indeed it is moſt true if Tradition can performe theſe pretenſions, and teach us plainly, and aſſure us infallibly of all truths, which they require us to believe, we can in this caſe have no reaſon to diſbelieve them, and therefore are certainly Hereticks if we doe, becauſe without a crime, without ſome humane intereſt or collaterall deſign, we cannot diſbelieve traditive Doctrine or traditive Interpretation, if it be infallibly prov'd to us that tradition is an infallible guide.

But here I firſt conſider that tradition is no repository of Articles of Faith, and therefore the not following it is no

Numb. 1.

Vincent. Lirinienſ. in Commonitor.

Numb. 2.

Argument of hereſy ; for beſides that I have ſhewed Scripture in its plain expreſſes to be an abundant rule of Faith and manners, Tradition is a topick as fallible as any other ; ſo fallible that it cannot be ſufficient evidence, to any man in a matter of Faith or Queſtion of hereſy.

Numb. 3.

For 1. I find that the Fathers were infinitely deceived in their account and enumeration of Traditions, ſometimes they did call ſome Traditions, ſuch, not which they knew to be ſo, but by Arguments and preſumptions they concluded them ſo. Such as was that of *S. Auſtin, ea quæ univerſalis tenet Eccleſia nec à Conciliis inſtituta reperimur, credibile eſt ab Apoſtolorum traditione deſcendiſſe*. Now ſuppoſe this rule probable, that's the moſt, yet it is not certain ; It might come by cuſtome, whoſe Originall was not knowne, but yet could not derive from an Apoſtolical principle. Now when they conclude of particular Traditions by a generall rule, and that generall rule not certain, but at the moſt probable in any thing, and certainly fallie in ſome things, it is wonder if the productions, that is, their judgments, and pretence faile ſo often. And if I ſhould but inſtance in all the particulars, in which Tradition was pretended falſly or uncertainly in the firſt Ages, I ſhould multiply them to a troubleſome variety ; for it was then accounted ſo glorious a thing to have ſpoken with the perſons of the Apoſtles, that if any man could with any colour pretend to it, he might abuſe the whole Church, and obtrude what he liſted under the ſpecious title of Apoſtolical Tradition, and it is very notorious to every man that will but read and obſerve the Recognitions or ſtromata of *Clement Alexandrinus*, where there is enough of ſuch falſe wares ſhewed in every book, and pretended to be no leſſe then from the Apoſtles. In the firſt Age after the Apoſtles, *Papias* pretended he received a Tradition from the Apoſtles, that Chriſt before the day of Judgement ſhould reign a thouſand yeares upon Earth, and his Saints with him in temporall felicities ; and this thing proceeding from ſo great an Authority as the teſtimony of *Papias*, drew after it all or moſt of the Chriſtians in the firſt three hundred yeares. For beſides, that the Millenary opinion is expreſſly taught by *Papias, Juſtin Martyr, Irenæus, Origen, Laſtancius, Severus, Vitorinus, Aſollinaris, Nepor,*

Epift. 118. ad
lanuar.
De bapt. contr.
Donat. lib. 4.
c. 24.

Nepos, and divers others famous in their time, *Juſtin Martyr* in his Dialogue againſt *Tryphon* ſayes, it was the beliefe of all Chriſtians exactly Orthodox, καὶ οἱ πάντες εἰς αὐτὴν ἀποδοχὴν ἔλαβον Χριſτιανῶν, and yet there was no ſuch Tradition, but a miſtake in *Papias*; but I find it nowhere ſpoke againſt, till *Dionyſius* of *Alexandria* confuted *Nepos's* Book, and converted *Coracion* the *Egyptian* from the opinion. Now if a Tradition whoſe beginning of being called ſo began with a Scholar of the Apoſtles (for ſo was *Papias*) and then continued for ſome Ages upon the meer Authority of ſo famous a man, did yet deceive the Church: much more fallible is the pretence, when two or three hundred years after, it but commences, and then by ſome learned man is firſt called a Tradition Apoſtolicall. And ſo it hapned in the caſe of the *Arrian* hereſy, which the *Nicene* Fathers did confute by objecting a contrary Tradition Apoſtolicall, as *Theodoret* reports; and yet if they had not had better Arguments from Scripture then from Tradition, they would have failed much in ſo good a cauſe; for this very pretence the *Arrians* themſelves made, and deſired to be tryed by the Fathers of the firſt three hundred years, which was a confutation ſufficient to them who pretended a clear Tradition, becauſe it was unimaginable that the Tradition ſhould leap ſo as not to come from the firſt to the laſt by the middle. But that this tryall was ſometime declined by that excellent man *S. Athanaſius*, although at other times confidently and truly pretended, it was an Argument the Tradition was not ſo clear, but both ſides might with ſome fairneſſe pretend to it. And therefore one of the prime Founders of their hereſy, the Heretick † *Artemon* having obſerved the advantage might be taken by any Sect that would pretend Tradition, becauſe the medium was plauſible and conſiſting of ſo many particulars, that it was hard to be redargued, pretended a Tradition from the Apoſtles, that Chriſt was υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου, and that the Tradition did deſcend by a conſtant ſucceſſion in the Church of *Rome* to Pope *Veleſors* time incluſively, and till *Zepherinus* had interrupted the ſeries and corrupted the Doctrine; which pretence if it had not had ſome appearance of truth, ſo as poſſibly to abuſe the Church, had not been worthy of conſutation, which yet was with care un-

Lib. 1. hiſt. c. 8.

Vide Pet. in
Epiph. her. 69.

καὶ γὰρ εἰς
πάντες ὁ εἶλε
ἔλαβον ἀπὸ τῶ
ἡμετέρου γένους
ἐμολογοῦντες
αὐτὸν Χριſτὸν
ὃν, ἀνθρώπου
ἢ υἱὸς ἀνθρώ-
που γένεσθαι
ἀποφαιδμενοι,
ὅτι ὁ σωτὴρ
μαί, ὅς ἐστι
πᾶσι ταῦ-
τα μοι δεξι-
σάντες ἐποίη-
ν
Juſtin Mart.
dial ad Tryph.
Iud.

dertaken by an old Writer, out of whom *Eusebius* transcribes a large passage to reprove the vanity of the pretender. But I observe from hence, that it was usuall to pretend to Tradition, and that it was easier pretended then confuted, and I doubt not but osiner done then discovered. A great Question arose in *Africa* concerning the Baptism of Hereticks, whether it were valid or no. *S. Cyprian* and his party appealed to Scripture; *Stephen* Bishop of *Rome* and his party, would be judged by custome and Tradition Ecclesiasticall. See how much the nearer the Question was to a determination, either that probation was not accounted by *S. Cyprian*, and the Bishops both of *Asia* and *Africk*, to be a good Argument, and sufficient to determine them, or there was no certain Tradition against them; for unlesse one of these two doe it, nothing could excuse them from opposing a known truth, unlesse peradventure, *S. Cyprian*, *Firmilian*, the Bishops of *Galatia*, *Cappadocia*, and almost two parts of the World were ignorant of such a Tradition, for they knew of none such, and some of them expressly denyed it. And the sixth generall Synod approves of the Canon made in the Councell of *Carthage* under *Cyprian* upon this very ground, because in *prædictorum præsulum locis & solum secundum traditam eis consuetudinem servatus est*; they had a particular Tradition for Rebaptization, and therefore there could be no Tradition Universall against it, or if there were they knew not of it, but much for the contrary; and then it would be remembered that a conceal'd Tradition was like a silent Thunder, or a Law not promulgated; it neither was known, nor was obligatory. And I shall observe this too, that this very Tradition was so obscure, and was so obscurely delivered, silently proclaimed, that *S. Austin* who disputed against the *Donatists* upon this very Question was not able to prove it, but by a consequence which he thought probable and credible, as appears in his discourse against the *Donatists*. *The Apostles*, saith *S. Austin*, prescribed nothing in this particular: But this custome which is contrary to *Cyprian* ought to be believed to have come from their Tradition, as many other things which the Catholicke Church observes. That's all the ground and all the reason; nay the Church did waver concerning that Question, and before the decision

Can. 2.

L. 5. de baptism. contr. Donat. c. 23;

decision of a Councell, *Cyprian* and others might dissent without breach of charity. It was plain then there was no clear Tradition in the Question, possibly there might be a custome in some Churches *postnate* to the times of the Apostles, but nothing that was obligatory, no Tradition Apostolicall. But this was a supplementary device ready at hand when ever they needed it; and *S. Austin* confuted the *Pelagians*, in the Question of Originall sinne, by the custome of exorcisme and insufflation, which *S. Austin* said came from the Apostles by Tradition, which yet was then, and is now so impossible to be prov'd, that he that shall affirm it, shall gaine only the reputation of a bold man and a confident.

Lib. 1. de baptis-
m. c. 18.

De peccat. ori-
ginal. l. 2. c. 40.
contra Pelagi-
& Cælest.

2. I consider if the report of Traditions in the Primitive times so neare the Ages Apostolicall was so uncertain, that they were faine to aym at them by conjectures, and grope as in the dark, the uncertainty is much encreased since, because there are many famous Writers whose works are lost, which yet if they had continued, they might have been good records to us, as *Clemens Romanus*, *Egesippus*, *Nepos*, *Coracion*, *Dionysius Areopagite*, of *Alexandria*, of *Corinth*, *Firmilian* and many more: And since we see pretences have been made without reason in those Ages where they might better have been confuted, then now they can, it is greater prudence to suspect any later pretences, since so many Sects have been, so many warres, so many corruptions in Authors, so many Authors lost, so much ignorance hath intervned, and so many interests have been served, that now the rule is to be altered; and whereas it was of old time credible, that that was Apostolicall whose beginning they knew not, now quite contrary we cannot safely believe them to be Apostolicall unlesse we doe know their beginning to have been from the Apostles. For this consisting of probabilities and particulars, which put together make up a morall demonstration, the Argument which I now urge hath been growing these fifteen hundred years; and if anciently there was so much as to evacuate the Authority of Tradition, much more is there now absolutely to destroy it, when all the particulars, which time and infinite variety of humane accidents have been amassing together, are now concentred, and are united by way

Num. 23.

way of conſtitution. Becauſe every Age and every great change, and every hereſy, and every intereſt, hath increaſed the difficulty of finding out true Traditions.

Numb. 5.

3. There are very many Traditions which are loſt, and yet they are concerning matters of as great conſequence as moſt of thoſe Queſtions for the determination whereof Traditions are pretended: It is more then probable, that as in Baptiſm and the Eucharift the very formes of miniſtration are tranſmitted to us, ſo alſo in confirmation and ordination, and that there were ſpeciall directions for viſitation of the ſick, and explicate interpretations of thoſe difficult places of *S. Paul* which *S. Peter* affirmed to be ſo difficult that the ignorant doe wreſt them to their own damnation, and yet no Church hath conſerved theſe or thoſe many more which *S. Baſil* affirms to be ſo many that *ὅσα λέγει ἡμῶν τὰ ἄλλα καὶ ἐκκλησίας μυρία διηγήμενοι*; the day would fail him in the very ſimple enumeration of all Traditions Eccleſiaſticall. And if the Church hath fail'd in keeping the great variety of Traditions, it will hardly be thought a fault in a private perſon to neglect Tradition, which either the whole Church hath very much neglected inculpably, or elſe the whoſe Church is very much too blame. And who can aſcertain us that ſhe hath not entertained ſome which are no Traditions as well as loſt thouſands that are? That ſhe did entertain ſome falſe Traditions, I have already prov'd; but it is alſo as probable that ſome of thoſe which theſe Ages did propound for Traditions, are not ſo, as it is certain that ſome which the firſt Ages call Traditions, were nothing leſſe.

Cap. 29. de
ſpir. Sancto.

Numb. 6.

4. There are ſome opinions which when they began to be publicly received, began to be accounted prime Traditions, and ſo became ſuch not by a native title, but by adoption; and nothing is more uſuall then for the Fathers to colour their popular opinion with ſo great an appellative. *S. Auſtin* call'd the communicating of Infants an Apoſtolicall Tradition, and yet we doe not praſtiſe it, becauſe we diſbelieve the Allegation. And that every cuſtome which at firſt introduction was but a private fancy or ſingular praſtiſe, grew afterwards into a publicke ſite and went for a Tradition after a while continuance, appears by *Tertullian* who ſeems to juſtifie it, *Non enim exiſtimas in*

Contra Mar-
cion.

licitum

licitum eſſe cuicunqꝫ ſideli conſtituere quod Deo placere illi viſum fuerit, ad diſciplinam & ſalutem. And againe, *A quocunqꝫ traditore cenſetur, nec authorem reſpicias ſed authoritatem.* And S. Hierome moſt plainly, *Præcepta majorum Apoſtolicas Traditiones quicqꝫ exiſtimat.* And when Irenæus had obſerved that great variety in the keeping of Lent, which yet to be a forty dayes Faſt is pretended to deſcend from Tradition Apoſtolicall, ſome faſting but one day before Eaſter, ſome two, ſome forty, and this even long before Irenæus time, he gives this reaſon, *Varietas illa jejunii cepit apud Majores noſtros qui non accuratè conſuetudinem eorum qui vel ſimplicitate quãdam vel privatà authoritate in poſterum aliquid ſtauiſſent, obſervarant* [ex translatione Chriſtophorſoni:] And there are yet ſome points of good concernment, which if any man ſhould Queſtion in a high manner, they would prove indeterminable by Scripture, or ſufficient reaſon, and yet I doubt not their confident Defenders would ſay they are opinions of the Church, and quickly pretend a Tradition from the very Apoſtles, and believe themſelves ſo ſecure that they could not be diſcovered, becauſe the Queſtion never having been diſputed, gives them occaſion to ſay that which had no beginning known, was certainly from the Apoſtles. For why ſhould not Divines doe in the Queſtion of reconfirmation as in that of rebaptization? Are not the grounds equall from an indelible character in one as in the other? and if it happen ſuch a Queſtion as this after conteſtation ſhould be determin'd not by any poſitive decree, but by the ceſſion of one part, and the authority and reputation of the other, does not the next Age ſtand faire to be abuſed with a pretence of Tradition, in the matter of reconfirmation, which never yet came to a ſerious Queſtion? For ſo it was in the Queſtion of rebaptization for which there was then no more evident Tradition then there is now in the Queſtion of reconfirmation, as I proved formerly, but yet it was carried upon that Title.

5. There is great variety in the probation of Tradition, ſo that whatever is proved to be Tradition, is not equally and alike credible; for nothing but univerſall Tradition is of it ſelfe credible; other Traditions in their juſt proportion as they partake of the degrees of univerſality. Now that a Tradition be

De coron:
milic. c. 3. & 46

Apud Euseb.
l. 5. c. 24.

Numb. 7.

Lib. 3. c. 4.

Li. 1. Stromat.

L. 2. c. 39.

Omnes Seniores
 teſtantur
 qui in Aſia apud
 Iohannem
 Diſcipulum
 Domini con-
 venerunt id
 ipſum tradi-
 diſſe eis Io-
 hannem, &c. &
 qui alios Apo-
 ſtolos viderunt
 hæc eadem ab
 ipſis audiverunt,
 & teſtantur
 de ejuſmodi
 relatione.

Salmeron.
 diſput. 1. in
 Rom.

univerſall, or which is all one that it be a credible Teſtimony, S. *Irenæus* requires that Tradition ſhould derive from all the Churches Apoſtolicall. And therefore according to this rule there was no ſufficient medium to determine the Queſtion about Eaſter, becauſe the Eaſtern and Weſtern Churches had ſeverall Traditions reſpectively, and both pretended from the Apoſtles. *Clement Alexandrinus* ſayes, it was a ſecret Tradition from the Apoſtles that Chriſt preached but one year: But *Irenæus* ſayes it did derive from Hereticks, and ſayes that he by Tradition firſt from S. *John*, and then from his Diſciples received another Tradition, that Chriſt was almoſt fifty years old when he dyed, and ſo by conſequence preached almoſt twenty years; both of them were deceived, and ſo had all that had believed the report of either pretending Tradition Apoſtolicall. Thus the cuſtome in the Latine Church of faſting on Saturday was againſt that Tradition which the Greeks had from the Apoſtles; and therefore by this diviſion and want of conſent, which was the true Tradition was ſo abſolutely indeterminable, that both muſt needs loſe much of their reputation. But how then when not only particular Churches but ſingle perſons are all the prooſe we have for a Tradition? And this often hapned; I think S. *Auſtin* is the chiefe Argument and Authority we have for the Aſſumption of the Virgin *Mary*; the Baptiſm of Infants is called a Tradition by *Origen* alone at firſt, and from him by others. The proceſſion of the holy Ghoſt from the Sonne, which is an Article the Greek Church diſavowes, derives from the Tradition Apoſtolicall, as it is pretended; and yet before S. *Auſtin* we heare nothing of it very clearly or certainly, for as much as that whole myſtery concerning the bleſſed Spirit was ſo little explicated in Scripture, and ſo little derived to them by Tradition; that till the Councell of *Nice*, you ſhall hardly find any form of worſhip or perſonall addreſſe of devotion to the holy Spirit, as *Eraſmus* obſerves, and I think the contrary will very hardly be verified. And for this particular in which I inſtance, whatſoever is in Scripture concerning it, is againſt that which the Church of *Rome* calls Tradition, which makes the Greeks ſo confident as they are of the point, and is an Argument of the vanity of ſome things which for no greater

greater reason are called Traditions, but because one man hath said so, and that they can be proved by no better Argument to be true. Now in this case wherein Tradition descends upon us with unequall certainty, it would be very unequall to require of us an absolute beliefe of every thing not written, for seare we be accounted to slight Tradition Apostolicall. And since no thing can require our supreme assent, but that which is truly Catholike and Apostolike, and to such a Tradition is requir'd as *Irenæus* sayes, the consent of all those Churches which the Apostles planted, and where they did preside, this topick will be of so little use in judging heresies that (besides what is deposited in Scripture) it cannot be proved in any thing but in the Canon of Scripture it selfe, and as it is now received, even in that there is some variety.

And therefore there is wholly a mistake in this businesse; for when the Fathers appeal to Tradition, and with much earnestnesse, and some clamour they call upon Hereticks to conform to or to be tryed by Tradition, it is such a Tradition as delivers the fundamentall points of Christianity, which were also recorded in Scripture. But because the Canon was not yet perfectly confign'd, they call'd to that testimony they had, which was the testimony of the Churches Apostolicall, whose Bishops and Priests being the *Antistes religionis*, did believe and preach Christian Religion and conserve all its great mysteries according as they had been taught. *Irenæus* calls this a Tradition Apostolicall, *Christum accepisse calicem, & dixisse sanguinem suum esse, & docuisse novam oblationem novi Testamenti, quam Ecclesia per Apostolos accipiens offert per totum mundum.* And the Fathers in these Ages confute Hereticks by Ecclesiasticall Tradition, that is, they confront against their impious and blasphemous doctrines that Religion which the Apostles having taught to the Churches where they did preside, their Successors did still preach, and for a long while together suffered not the enemy to sow rares amongst their wheat. And yet these doctrines which they called Traditions, were nothing but such fundamentall truths which were in Scripture, *κατὰ σύνθεσιν τῶν γραφῶν*, as *Irenæus* in *Eusebius* observes, in the instance of *Polycarpus*, and it is manifest by considering what

Numb. 8.

Lib. 5. cap. 30.

Vid. Irenæ.
1.3 & 4. cont.
heret.

what heresies they fought against, the heresies of *Ebion*, *Cerinthus*, *Nicolaitans*, *Valentinians*, *Carpocratians*, persons that denied the Sonne of God, the Unity of the God-head, that preached impurity, that practised Sorcery and Witch-craft. And now that they did rather urge Tradition against them then Scripture, was, because the publike Doctrine of all the Apostolicall Churches was at first more known and famous then many parts of the Scripture, and because some Hereticks denied *S. Lukes* Gospel, some received none but *S. Matthews*, some rejected all *S. Pauls* Epistles, and it was a long time before the whole Canon was consign'd by universall Testimony, some Churches having one part some another, *Rome* her selfe had not all, so that in this case the Argument from Tradition was the most famous, the most certain, and the most prudent. And now according to this rule they had more Traditions then we have, and Traditions did by degrees lessen as they came to be written, and their necessity was lesse, as the knowledge of them was ascertained to us by a better Keeper of Divine Truths. All that great mysteriousnesse of Christs Priest-hood, the unity of his Sacrifice, Christs Advocacion and Intercession for us in Heaven, and many other excellent Doctrines might very well be accounted Traditions before *S. Pauls* Epistle to the *Hebrews* was publish'd to all the World; but now they are written truths; and if they had not, possibly we might either have lost them quite, or doubted of them as we doe of many other Traditions, by reason of the insufficiency of the propounder. And therefore it was that *S. Peter* took order that the Gospel should be Writ, for he had promised that he would doe something which after his decease should have these things in remembrance. He knew it was not safe trusting the report of men where the fountain might quickly run dry, or be corrupted so insensibly, that no cure could be found for it, nor any just notice taken of it till it were incurable. And indeed there is scarce any thing but what is written in Scripture, that can with any confidence of Argument pretend to derive from the Apostles, except ritualls, and manners of ministration; but no doctrines or speculative mysteries are so transmitted to us by so cleer a current, that we may see a visible channell,

and

2 Pet. 1.13.

and trace it to the Primitive fountaines. It is ſaid to be a Tradition Apoſtolicall, that no Priſt ſhould baptize without chriſm and the command of the Biſhop : Suppoſe it were, yet we cannot be oblig'd to believe it with much confidence, becauſe we have but little prooſe for it, ſcarce any thing but the ſingle teſtimony of S. Hierom. And yet if it were, this is but a rituall, of which in paſſing by, I ſhall give that account : That, ſuppoſe this and many more ritualls did derive clearly from Tradition Apoſtolicall (which yet but very few doe) yet it is hard that any Church ſhould be charged with crime for not obſerving ſuch ritualls, becauſe we ſee ſome of them which certainly did derive from the Apoſtles, are expir'd and gone out in a deſuetude ; ſuch as are abſtinance from blood, and from things ſtrangled, the carnobitick life of ſecular perſons, the colledge of widowes, to worſhip ſtanding upon the Lords day, to give milk and honey to the newly baptized, and many more of the like nature; now there having been no mark to diſtinguiſh the neceſſity of one from the indifferency of the other, they are all alike neceſſary, or alike indifferent ; if the former, why does no Church obſerve them? if the later, why does the Church of *Rome* charge upon others the ſhame of novelty, for leaving of ſome Rites and Ceremonies which by her own praſtice we are taught to have no obligation in them, but to be adiaphorous? S. Paul gave order, that a Biſhop ſhould be the huſband of one wiſe ; The Church of *Rome* will not allow ſo much; other Churches allow more : The Apoſtles commanded Chriſtians to Faſt on Wednesday and Friday, as appeares in their Canons ; The Church of *Rome* Faſts Friday and Saturday, and not on Wednesday: The Apoſtles had their Agapæ or love Feaſts, we ſhould believe them ſcandalous : They uſed a kiſſe of charity in ordinary addreſſes, the Church of *Rome* keeps it only in their Maſſe, other Churches quite omit it: The Apoſtles permitted Prieſts and Deacons to live in conjugal Society as appears in the 5. Can. of the Apoſtles (which to them is an Argument who believe them ſuch) and yet the Church of *Rome*, by no meanes will endure it ; nay more, Michael Medina gives Teſtimony that of 84. Canons Apoſtolicall which *Clement* collected, ſcarce ſix or eight are obſerved by the Latine Church,

Dialog. adv.
Lucifer,

De ſacr. hom.
continent,
li. 5. c. 105.

De Tradit.
part. 3. c. de
Author. Can.
Apoſt.

and *Pereſius* gives this account of it, *In illis contineri multa quæ temporum corruptione non plenè obſervantur, aliis pro temporis & materia qualitate aut obliteratis, aut totius Eccleſiæ magiſterio abrogatis.* Now it were good that they which take a liberty to themſelves, ſhould alſo allow the ſame to others. So that for one thing or other, all Traditions excepting thoſe very few that are abſolutely univerſall, will loſe all their obligation, and become no competent medium to confine mens practices, or limit their faiths, or determine their perſwaſions. Either for the difficulty of their being prov'd, the incompetency of the testimony that tranſmits them, or the indifferency of the thing tranſmitted, all Traditions both rituell and doctrinall are diſabled from determining our conſciences either to a neceſſary believing or obeying.

Numb. 9.

6. To which I adde by way of confirmation, that there are ſome things called Traditions, and are offered to be proved to us by a Testimony, which is either falſe or not extant. *Clement* of *Alexandria* pretended it a Tradition that the Apoſtles preached to them that dyed in infidelity, even after their death, and then raiſed them to life, but he proved it only by the Testimony of the Book of *Hermes*; he affirmed it to be a Tradition Apoſtolicall, that the *Greeks* were ſaved by their Philoſophy, but he had no other Authority for it but the Apocryphall Books of *Peter* and *Paul*. *Tertullian* and *S. Baſil* pretend it an Apoſtolicall Tradition, to ſign in the aire with the ſign of the Croſſe, but this was only conſign'd to them in the Goſpel of *Nicodemus*. But to inſtance once for all in the Epittle of *Marcellus* to the Biſhop of *Antioch*, where he affirms that it is the Canon of the Apoſtles, *præter ſententiam Romani Pontificis, non poſſe Concilia celebrari.* And yet there is no ſuch Canon extant, nor ever was for ought appears in any Record we have; and yet the Collection of the Canons is ſo intire, that though it hath ſomething more then what was Apoſtolicall, yet it hath nothing leſſe. And now that I am caſually fallen upon an inſtance from the Canons of the Apoſtles, I conſider that there cannot in the world a greater inſtance be given how eaſy it is to be abuſed in the believing of Traditions. For 1. to the firſt 30. which many did admit for Apoſtolicall, 35
more

more were added, which moſt men now count ſpurious, all men call dubious, and ſome of them univerſally condemned by peremptory ſentence, even by them who are greateſt admirers of that Collection, as 65. 67. and 8th Canons. For the firſt 50, it is evident that there are ſome things ſo mixt with them, and no mark of difference left, that the credit of all is much impaired, inſomuch that *Iſidor of Seville ſayes, they were Apocryphall, made by Hereticks, and publiſhed under the title Apoſtolicall, but neither the Fathers nor the Church of Rome did give aſſent to them.* And yet they have prevail'd ſo farre amongſt ſome, that *Damaſcen* is of opinion they ſhould be received equally with the Canonick writings of the Apoſtles. One thing only I obſerve (and we ſhall find it true in moſt writings, whoſe Authority is urged in *Questions of Theology*) that the Authority of the Tradition is not it which moves the aſſent, but the nature of the thing; and becauſe ſuch a Canon is delivered, they doe not therefore believe the ſanction or propoſition ſo delivered, but diſbelieve the Tradition, if they doe not like the matter, and ſo doe not judge of the matter by the Tradition, but of the Tradition by the matter. And thus the Church of *Rome* rejects the 84 or 85 Canon of the Apoſtles, not becauſe it is delivered with leſſe Authority, then the laſt 35 are, but becauſe it reckons the Canon of Scripture otherwiſe then it is at *Rome*. Thus alſo the fifth Canon amongſt the firſt 50, becauſe it approves the marriage of Prieſts and Deacons does not perſwade them to approve of it too, but it ſelfe becomes ſuſpected for approving it: So that either they accuſe themſelves of palpable contempt of the Apoſtolicall Authority, or elſe that the reputation of ſuch Traditions is kept up to ſerve their own ends, and therefore when they encounter them, they are more to be upheld; which what elſe is it but to teach all the world to contemn ſuch pretences and undervalue Traditions, and to ſupply to others a reaſon why they ſhould doe that, which to them that give the occaſion is moſt unreaſonable?

Apud Gratian.
diſt. 16. c. Ca-
nones.

Lib. 2. c. 18. de
Orthod. fide.

7. The Teſtimony of the Ancient Church being the only means of proving Tradition, and ſometimes their dictates and doctrine being the Tradition pretended of neceſſity to be imitated,

Numb. 106.

• Vid. Card.
Peir. n. lettre
au Sieur
Cafaubon.

imitated, it is conſiderable that men in their eſtimate of it, take their riſe from ſeverall Ages and differing Teſtimonies, and are not agreed about the competency of their Teſtimony; and the reaſons that on each ſide make them differ, are ſuch as make the Authority it ſelfe the leſſe authentick and more repudiable. Some will allow only of the three firſt Ages, as being moſt pure, moſt persecuted, and therefore moſt holy, leaſt intereſted, ſerving fewer deſigns, having feweſt factions, and therefore more likely to ſpeak the truth for Gods ſake and its own, as beſt complying with their great end of acquiring Heaven in recompence of loſing their lives: Others ſay, that thoſe Ages being persecuted minded the preſent Doctrines proportionable to their purpoſes and conſtitution of the Ages, and make little or nothing of thoſe Questions which at this day vex Chriſtendome: And both ſpeak true: The firſt Ages ſpeak greateſt truth, but leaſt pertinently. The next Ages, the Ages of the ſoure generall Councils ſpake ſomething, not much more pertinently to the preſent Questions, but were not ſo likely to ſpeak true, by reaſon of their diſpoſitions contrary to the capacity and circumſtance of the firſt Ages; and if they ſpeak wiſely as Doctors, yet not certainly as witneſſes of ſuch propoſitions which the firſt Ages noted not; and yet unleſſe they had noted, could not poſſibly be Traditions. And therefore either of them will be leſſe uſeleſſe as to our preſent affaires. For indeed the Questions which now are the publike trouble, were not conſidered or thought upon for many hundred years, and therefore prime Tradition there is none as to our purpoſe, and it will be an inſufficient medium to be uſed or pretended in the determination; and to diſpute concerning the truth or neceſſity of Traditions, in the Questions of our times, is as if Hiſtorians diſputing about a Question in the Engliſh Story, ſhould fall on wrangling whether *Livy* or *Plutarch* were the beſt Writers: And the earneſt diſputes about Traditions are to no better purpoſe. For no Church at this day admits the one halfe of thoſe things, which certainly by the Fathers were called Traditions Apoſtolically, and no Teſtimony of ancient Writers does conſign the one halfe of the preſent Questions, to be or not to be Traditions. So that they who admit only the Doctrine and Teſtimony

of

of the firſt Ages cannot be determined in moſt of their doubts which now trouble us, becauſe their Writings are of matters wholly differing from the preſent diſputes, and they which would bring in after Ages to the Authority of a competent judge or witneſſe, ſay the ſame thing; for they plainly confeſſe that the firſt Ages ſpoke little or nothing to the preſent Queſtion, or at leaſt nothing to their ſenſe of them; for therefore they call in aid from the following Ages, and make them ſuppletory and auxiliary to their deſigns, and therefore there are no Traditions to our purpoſes. And they who would willingly have it otherwiſe, yet have taken no courſe it ſhould be otherwiſe; for they when they had opportunity in the Councils of the laſt Ages to determine what they had a mind to, yet they never nam'd the number, nor expreſſed the particular Traditions which they would faine have the world believe to be Apoſtolicall: But they have kept the bridle in their own hands, and made a reſerve of their own power, that if need be, they may make new pretenſions, or not be put to it to juſtifie the old by the engagement of a conciliary declaration:

Laſtly, We are acquitted by the Teſtimony of the Primitive Fathers, from any other neceſſity of believing, then of ſuch Articles as are recorded in Scripture: And this is done by them, whoſe Authority is pretended the greateſt Argument for Tradition, as appears largely in *Irenæus*, who diſputes profeſſedly for the ſufficiency of Scripture againſt certain Hereticks, who affirm ſome neceſſary truths not to be written. It was an excellent ſaying of *S. Baſil* and will never be wipt out with all the eloquence of *Perron* [in his Sermon, *de fide. Maniſeſtus eſt fidei lapſus, & liquidum ſuperbia vitium vel reſpuere aliquid eorum que Scriptura habet, vel inducere quicquam quod ſcriptum non eſt.*] And it is but a poore device to ſay that every particular Tradition is conſigned in Scripture by thoſe places which give Authority to Tradition; and ſo the introducing of Tradition is not a ſuper-inducing any thing over or beſides Scripture, becauſe Tradition is like a Meſſenger, and the Scripture is like his Letters of Credence, and therefore Authorizes whatſoever Tradition ſpeaketh. For ſuppoſing Scripture does conſign the Authority of Tradition (which it might doe before all the whole

Numb. 11;

*L. 3. c. 2. conſe-
hæref.*

Instrument of Scripture it ſelf was conſign'd, and then afterwards there might be no need of Tradition) yet ſuppoſing it, it will follow that all thoſe Traditions which are truly prime and Apoſtolicall, are to be entertain'd according to the intention of the Deliverers, which indeed is ſo reaſonable of it ſelfe, that we need not Scripture to perſwade us to it ; it ſelfe is authentick as Scripture is, if it derives from the ſame ſountain ; and a word is never the more the Word of God for being written, nor the leſſe for not being written ; but it will not follow that whatſoever is pretended to be Tradition, is ſo, neither is the credit of the particular inſtances conſign'd in Scripture ; & *doloſus verſatur in generalibus*, but that this craft is too palſable. And if a generall and indefinite conſignation of Tradition be ſufficient to warrant every particular that pretends to be Tradition, then *S. Baſil* had ſpoken to no purpoſe by ſaying it is Pride & Apoſtaſy from the Faith, to bring in what is not written: For if either any man brings in what is written, or what he ſayes is delivered, then the firſt being expreſſe Scripture, and the ſecond being conſign'd in Scripture, no man can be charged with ſuperinducing what is not written, he hath his Answer ready ; And then theſe are zealous words abſolutely to no purpoſe ; but if ſuch generall conſignation does not warrant every thing that pretends to Tradition, but only ſuch as are truly proved to be Apoſtolicall ; then Scripture is uſeleſſe as to this particular ; for ſuch Tradition gives teſtimony to Scripture, and therefore is of it ſelfe firſt, and more credible, for it is credible of it ſelfe ; and therefore unleſſe *S. Baſil* thought that all the will of God in matters of Faith and Doctrines were written, I ſee not what end nor what ſenſe he could have in theſe words : For no man in the world except *Enthuſiaſts* and mad-men ever obtruded a Doctrine upon the Church, but he pretended Scripture for it or Tradition, and therefore no man could be preſſed by theſe words, no man confuted, no man inſtructed, no not *Enthuſiaſts* or *Montaniſts*. For ſuppoſe either of them ſhould ſay, that ſince in Scripture the holy Ghoſt is promiſed to abide with the Church for ever, to teach, whatever they pretend the Spirit in any Age hath taught them, is not to ſuper-induce any thing beyond what is written, becauſe the truth of the Spirit, his veracity, and his perpetuall

petuall teaching being promiſed and atteſted in Scripture, Scripture hath juſt ſo conſign'd all ſuch Revelations as *Perron* ſaith it hath all ſuch Traditions. But I will trouble my ſelfe no more with Arguments from any humane Authorities; but he that is ſurprized with the beliefe of ſuch Authorities, and will but conſider the very many Teſtimonies of Antiquity to this purpoſe, as of ^a *Conſtantine*, ^b *S. Hieron.*, ^c *S. Auſtin*, ^d *S. Athanaſius*, ^e *S. Hilary*, ^f *S. Epiphanius*, and divers others, all ſpeaking words to the ſame ſenſe, with that ſaying of *S. Paul*, *Nemo ſentiat ſuper quod ſcriptum eſt*; will ſee that there is reaſon, that ſince no man is materially a Heretick, but he that erres in a point of Faith, and all Faith is ſufficiently recorded in Scripture, the judgement of Faith and Hereſy is to be derived from thence, and no man is to be condemned for diſſenting in an Article for whoſe probation Tradition only is pretended; only according to the degree of its evidence, let every one determine himſelfe, but of this evidence we muſt not judge for others; for unleſſe it be in things of Faith, and abſolute certainties, evidence is a word of relation, and ſo ſuppoſes two terms, the object and the faculty; and it is an imperfect ſpeech to ſay a thing is evident in it ſelfe (unleſſe we ſpeak of firſt principles or cleareſt revelations) for that may be evident to one that is not ſo to another, by reaſon of the pregnancy of ſome apprehenſions, and the immaturity of others.

This Diſcourſe hath its intention in Traditions Doctrinall and Ritvall, that is ſuch Traditions which propoſe Articles new *in materia*; but now if Scripture be the repository of all Divine Truths ſufficient for us, Tradition muſt be conſidered as its inſtrument, to convey its great myſteriouſneſſe to our underſtandings; it is ſaid there are traditive Interpretations as well as traditive propoſitions, but theſe have not much diſtinct conſideration in them, both becauſe their uncertainty is as great as the other upon the former conſiderations; as alſo becauſe in very deed, there are no ſuch things as traditive Interpretations univerſall: For as for particulars, they ſignifie no more but that they are not ſufficient determinations of Queſtions Theologicall, therefore becauſe they are particular, contingent, and of infinite variety, and they are no more Argu-

^a Orat. ad Nicen. PP. apud. Theodor. l. 1.

^c 7.

^b In Math. l. 4.

^c 13. & in Ag-

gæum.

^c De bono vi-

duil. c. 1.

^d Orat. contr.

gent.

^e In Pſal. 132.

^f L. 2. contra.

hereſ. tom. 1.

hæc. 61.

g 1. Cor. 4.

ment then the particular authority of these men whose Commentaries they are, and therefore must be considered with them.

Numb. 12.

The summe is this : Since the Fathers who are the best Witnesses of Traditions, yet were infinitely deceived in their account, since sometimes they guess at them and conjectured by way of Rule and Discourse, and not of their knowledge, not by evidence of the thing ; since many are called Traditions which were not so, many are uncertaine whether they were or no, yet confidently pretended ; and this uncertainty which at first was great enough, is increased by infinite causes and accidents in the succession of 1600 yeares ; since the Church hath been either so carelesse or so abused that shee could not, or would not preserve Traditions with carefulnesse and truth ; since it was ordinary for the old Writers to set out their own fancies, and the Rites of their Church which had been Ancient under the specious Title of Apostolicall Traditions ; since some Traditions rely but upon single Testimony at first, and yet descending upon others, come to be attested by many, whose Testimony though conjunct, yet in value is but single, because it relies upon the first single Relator, and so can have no greater authority, or certainty, then they derive from the single person ; since the first Ages who were most competent to consign Tradition, yet did consign such Traditions as be of a nature wholly discrepant from the present Questions, and speak nothing at all or very imperfectly to our purposes ; and the following Ages are no fit Witnesses of that which was not transmitted to them, because they could not know it at all, but by such transmission and prior consignment ; since what at first was a Tradition, came afterwards to be written, and so ceased its being a Tradition ; yet the credit of Traditions commended upon the certainty and reputation of those truths first delivered by word, afterward consign'd by writing ; since what was certainly Tradition Apostolicall, as many Rituals were, are rejected by the Church in severall Ages, and are gone out into a desuetude ; and lastly, since, beside the no necessity of Traditions, there being abundantly enough in Scripture, there are many things called Traditions by the Fathers, which they

them.

themselves either proved by no Authors, or by Apocryphall and ſpurious and Hereticall, the matter of Tradition will in very much be ſo uncertain, ſo falſe, ſo ſuſpicious, ſo contradictory, ſo improbable, ſo unproved, that if a Queſtion be con-
 ceſted and be offered to be proved only by Tradition, it will be very hard to impoſe ſuch a propoſition to the beliefe of all men with any imperiouſneſſe or reſolved determination, but it will be neceſſary men ſhould preſerve the liberty of believing and propheſying, and not part with it, upon a worſe merchandiſe and exchange then *Eſau* made for his birth-right.

SECT. VI.

Of the uncertainty and inſufficiency of Councils Eccleſiaſticall to the ſame purpoſe.

BUT ſince we are all this while in uncertainty, it is neceſſary that we ſhould addreſſe our ſelves ſomewhere, where we may reſt the ſole of our foot: And nature, Scripture, and experience teach the world in matters of Queſtion to ſubmit to ſome finall ſentence. For it is not reaſon that controverſies ſhould continue till the erring perſon ſhall be willing to condemn himſelfe; and the Spirit of God hath directed us by that great precedent at *Jeruſalem*, to addreſſe our ſelves to the Church, that in a plenary Councell and Aſſembly, ſhee may ſynodically determine Controverſies. So that if a Generall Councell have determin'd a Queſtion, or expounded Scripture, we may no more diſbelieve the Decree, then the Spirit of God himſelfe who ſpeaks in them. And indeed, if all Aſſemblies of Biſhops were like that firſt, and all Biſhops were of the ſame ſpirit of which the Apoſtles were, I ſhould obey their Decree with the ſame Religion as I doe them whole preface was *Viſum eſt Spiritui Sancto & nobis*: And I doubt not but our bleſſed Saviour intended that the Aſſemblies of the Church ſhould be Judges of Controverſies, and guides of our perſua-

Numb. 1.

sions in matters of difficulty. But he also intended they should proceed according to his will which he had revealed, and those precedents which he had made authentick by the immediate assistance of his holy Spirit: He hath done his part, but we do not doe ours. And if any private person in the simplicity and purity of his soule desires to find out a truth of which he is in search and inquisition, if he prays for wisdom, we have a promise he shall be heard and answered liberally, and therefore much more, when the representatives of the Catholike Church doe meet, because every person there hath *in individuo* a title to the promise, and another title as he is a governour and a guide of soules, and all of them together have another title in their united capacity, especially, if in that union they pray, and proceed with simplicity and purity; so that there is no disputing against the pretence and promises, and authority of Generall Councils. For if any one man can hope to be guided by Gods Spirit in the search, the pious and impartiall and unprejudicate search of truth, then much more may a Generall Councell. If no private man can hope for it, then truth is not necessary to be found, nor we are not oblig'd to search for it, or else we are sav'd by chance: But if private men can by virtue of a promise, upon certain conditions be assured of finding out sufficient truth, much more shall a Generall Councell. So that I consider thus: There are many promises pretended to belong to Generall Assemblies in the Church; But I know not any ground, nor any pretence, that they shall be absolutely assisted, without any condition on their own parts, and whether they will or no: Faith is a virtue as well as charity, and therefore consists in liberty and choyce, and hath nothing in it of necessity: There is no Question but that they are obliged to proceed according to some rule; for they expect no assistance by way of *Enthusiasme*; if they should, I know no warrant for that, neither did any Generall Councell ever offer a Decree which they did not think sufficiently prov'd by Scripture, Reason, or Tradition, as appears in the Acts of the Councils; now then, if they be tyed to conditions, it is their duty to observe them; but whether it be certaine that they will observe them, that they will doe all their duty, that they will not sin

even

even in this particular in the neglect of their duty, that's the consideration. So that if any man questions the Title and Authority of Generall Councils, and whether or no great promises appertain to them, I suppose him to be much mistaken; but he also that thinks all of them have proceeded according to rule and reason, and that none of them were deceived, because possibly they might have been truly directed; is a stranger to the History of the Church, and to the perpetuall instances and experiments of the faults and failings of humanity. It is a famous saying of S. Gregory that he had the four first Councils in esteem and veneration next to the four Evangelists; I suppose it was because he did believe them to have proceeded according to Rule, and to have judged righteous judgement; but why had not he the same opinion of other Councils too which were celebrated before his death, for he lived after the fifth Generall? not because they had not the same Authority; for that which is warrant for one is warrant for all; but because he was not so confident that they did their duty nor proceeded so without interest as the first four had done, and the following Councils did never get that reputation which all the Catholike Church acknowledged due to the first four. And in the next Order were the three following generalls; for the Greeks and Latines did never joyntly acknowledge but seven generalls to have been authentick in any sense, because they were in no sense agreed that any more then seven had proceeded regularly and done their duty: So that now the Question is not whether Generall Councils have a promise that the holy Ghost will assist them; For every private man hath that promise, that if he does his duty he shall be assisted sufficiently in order to that end to which he needs assistance; and therefore much more shall Generall Councils in order to that end for which they convene, and to which they need assistance, that is, in order to the conservation of the Faith; for the doctrinall rules of good life, and all that concerns the essentiall duty of a Christian, but not in deciding Questions to satisfy contentious or curious or presumptuous spirits. But now can the Bishops so conven'd be factious, can they be abused with prejudice, or transported with interests, can they resist the holy Ghost,

Ghost, can they extinguish the Spirit, can they stop their eares, and serve themselves upon the holy Spirit and the presence of his assistances, and cease to serve him upon themselves, by captivating their understandings to his dictates, and their wills to his precepts? Is it necessary they should perform any condition? is there any one duty for them to perform in these Assemblies, a duty which they have power to doe or not doe? If so, then they may faile of it, and not doe their duty: And if the assistance of the holy Spirit be conditionall, then we have no more assurance that they are assisted, then that they doe their duty and doe not sinne.

Numb. 2.

Now let us suppose what this duty is: Certainly, if the Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; and all that come to the knowledge of the truth, must come to it by such meanes which are spirituall and holy dispositions, in order to a holy and spirituall end. They must be shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace, that is, they must have peaceable and docible dispositions, nothing with them that is violent, and resolute to encounter those gentle and sweet assistances: and the Rule they are to follow, is the Rule which the holy Spirit hath assign'd to the Catholike Church, that is the holy Scripture, either * intirely or at least for the greater part of the Rule: So that now if the Bishops bee factious and prepossest with perswasions depending upon interest, it is certain they may judge amisse; and if they recede from the Rule, it is certain they doe judge amisse: And this I say upon their grounds who most advance the authority of Generall Councils: For if a Generall Councell may erre if a Pope confirm it not, then most certainly if in any thing it recede from Scripture, it does also erre; because that they are to expect the Popes confirmation they offer to prove from Scripture: now if the Popes confirmation be required by authority of Scripture, and that therefore the defaillance of it does evacuate the Authority of the Councell, then also are the Councils Decrees invalid, if they recede from any other part of Scripture: So that Scripture is the Rule they are to follow, and a man would have thought it had been needlesse to have proved it, but that we are fallen into Ages in which no truth is certaine, no reason concluding

* Vid. Optat. Milev. l. 5. ad v. Parm. Baldwin, in cundem. & S. August. in Pla. 21. Expof. 2.

concluding, nor is there any thing that can convince ſome men. For *Scapleton* with extreme boldneſſe againſt the piety of Chriſtendome, againſt the publike ſenſe of the ancient Church, and the praſtiſe of all pious Aſſemblies of Biſhops aſſirms the Decrees of a Councell to be binding, *etiamſi non confirmetur ne probabili teſtimonio Scripturarum*; nay, though it be quite *extra Scripturam*, but all wiſe and good men have ever ſaid that ſenſe which *S. Hilary* expreſſed in theſe words, *Que extra Evangelium ſunt non defendam*; This was it which the good Emperour *Conſtantine* propounded to the Fathers met at *Nice*, *libri Evangelici, oracula Apoſtolorum, & veterum Prophetarum* clare nos inſtruunt quid ſenſiendum in Divinis, and this is confeſſed by a ſober man of the Roman Church it ſelfe, the Cardinall of *Cuſa*, *Oportet quod omnia talia qua legere debent, contineantur in Authoritatibus ſacrarum Scripturarum*: Now then all the advantage I ſhall take from hence, is this, That if the Apoſtles commended them who examined their Sermons by their conformity to the Law and the Prophets, and the men of *Berea* were accounted noble for ſearching the Scriptures whether thoſe things which they taught were ſo or no; I ſuppoſe it will not be denied, but the Councels Decrees, may alſo be tryed whether they be conform to Scripture yea or no; and although no man can take cogniſance and judge the Decrees of a Councell *pro Authoritate publicâ*, yet *pro informatione privatâ* they may; the Authority of a Councell is not greater then the Authority of the Apoſtles, nor their diſtates more ſacred or authentick. Now then put caſe a Councell ſhould recede from Scripture; whether or no were we bound to believe its Decrees? I only aſke the Queſtion: For it were hard to be bound to believe what to our underſtanding ſeems contrary to that which we know to be the Word of God: But if we may lawfully recede from the Councels Decrees, in caſe they be contrariant to Scripture, it is all that I require in this Queſtion. For if they be tyed to a Rule, then they are to be examined and underſtood according to the Rule, and then we are to give our ſelves that liberty of judgement which is requiſite to diſtinguiſh us from beaſts, and to put us into a capacity of reaſonable people, following reaſonable guides.

Relic. cen.
rov. 4. q. 2. a. 3

I. 2. ad Con-
ſtant.
Apud Theodor.
11. c. 7.

Concord. Ca-
thol. 12. c. 10.

how ever if it be certaine that the Councells are to follow Scripture, then if it be notorious that they doe recede from Scripture, we are ſure we muſt obey God rather then men, and then we are well enough. For unleſſe we are bound to ſhut our eyes, and not to look upon the Sunne, if we may give our ſelves liberty to believe what ſeemes moſt plaine, and unleſſe the Authority of a Councell be ſo great a prejudice as to make us to doe violence to our underſtanding, ſo as not to diſbelieve the Decree, becauſe it ſeemes contrary to Scripture, but to believe it agrees with Scripture, though we know not how, therefore becauſe the Councell hath decreed it, unleſſe I ſay we be bound in duty to be ſo obediently blind, and ſottiſh, we are ſure that there are ſome Councells which are pretended Generall, that have retired from the publike notorious words and ſence of Scripture. For what wit of man can reconcile the Decree of the thirteenth Session of the Councell of *Conſtance* with Scripture, in which Session the halfe Communion was decreed, in defiance of Scripture, and with a *non obſtante* to Chriſts institution. For in the Preface of the Decree, Chriſts institution and the praſtiſe of the Primitive Church is expreſſed, and then with a *non obſtante*, Communion in one kind is eſtabliſht. Now then ſuppoſe the *non obſtante* in the form of words relates to the Primitive praſtiſe; yet ſince Chriſts institution was taken notice of in the firſt words of the Decree, and the Decree made quite contrary to it, let the *non obſtante* relate whither it will, the Decree (not to call it a defiance) is a plaine reſeſſion from the institution of Chriſt, and therefore the *non obſtante* will referre to that without any ſenſible error; and indeed for all the excuſes to the contrary, the Decree was not ſo diſcreetly fram'd but that in the very form of words, the defiance and the *non obſtante* is too plainly relative to the firſt words. For what ſenſe can there be in the firſt *licet* elſe? *licet Chriſtus in uſuq; ſpecie*, and *licet Eccleſia Primitiva*, &c. *tamen hoc non obſtante*, &c. the firſt *licet* being a relative terme, as well as the ſecond *licet*, muſt be bounded with ſome correpſpondent. But it matters not much; let them whom it concernes enjoy the benefit of all excuſes they can imagine, it is certaine Chriſts institution and the Councels ſanction are

are as contrary as light and darknesse. Is it possible for any man to contrive a way to make the Decree of the Councell of *Trent*, commanding the publike Offices of the Church to be in Latine, friends with the fourteenth chapter of the *Corinthians*? It is not amisse to observe how the Hyperaspists of that Councell sweat to answer the Allegations of *S. Paul*, and the wisest of them doe it so extremely poore, that it proclaimes to all the world that the strongest man, that is, cannot eat Iron or swallow a Rock. Now then, would it not be an unspeakable Tyranny to all wise persons, (who as much hate to have their soules enslaved as their bodies imprisoned) to command them to believe that these Decrees are agreeable to the word of God? Upon whose understanding soever these are imposed, they may at the next Session reconcile them to a crime, and make any sinne sacred, or perswade him to believe propositions contradictory to a Mathematicall demonstration. All the Arguments in the world that can be brought to prove the infallibility of Councils, can not make it to certain that they are infallible, as these two instances doe prove infallibly that these were deceived, and if ever we may safely make use of our reason and consider whether Councils have erred or no, we cannot by any reason be more assured, that they have or have not, then we have in these particulars: so that either our reason is of no manner of use, in the discussion of this Question, and the thing it selfe is not at all to be disputed, or if it be, we are certain that these actually were deceived, and we must never hope for a clearer evidence in any dispute. And if these be, others might have been, if they did as these did, that is, depart from their Rule. And it was wisely said of *Cusanus*: *Notandum est experimento rerum universale Concilium posse deficere*: The experience of it is notorious, that Councils have erred: And all the Arguments against experience are but plain sophistry.

La. c. 14. Concord. Cathol.

And therefore I make no scruple to slight the Decrees of such Councils, wherein the proceedings were as prejudicate and unreasonable, as in the Councell wherein *Sibailardus* was condemned, where the presidents having pronounced *Damnatus*, they at the lower end being awaked at the noise, heard the latter part of it, and concurred as farre as *Ad damnus* went, and

Num. 30

Epist. Abailard.
di. ad Heliss.
conjugem.

* Cusanus, l. 2.
cap. 25, Con-
cord.

that was as good as *Damnatus*, for if they had been awake at the pronouncing the whole word, they would have given sentence accordingly. But by this meanes S. *Bernard* numbred the major part of voices against his Adversary *Abailardus*: And as farre as these men did doe their duty, the duty of Priests and Judges, and wise men; so we may presume them to be assisted: But no further. But I am content this (because but a private Assembly) shall passe for no instance: But what shall we say of all the Arrian Councils celebrated with so great fancy, and such numerous Assemblies? we all say that they erred. And it will not be sufficient to say they were not lawfull Councils: For they were conven'd by that Authority which all the world knowes did at that time convocate Councils, and by which (as it is * confessed and is notorious) the first eight Generalls did meet, that is by the Authority of the Emperour all were called, and as many and more did come to them, then came to the most famous Council of *Nice*: So that the Councils were lawfull, and if they did not proceed lawfully, and therefore did erre, this is to say that Councils are then not deceiv'd, when they doe their duty, when they judge impartially, when they decline interest, when they follow their Rule; but this sayes also that it is not infallibly certain that they will doe so; for these did not, and therefore the others may be deceiv'd as well as these were. But another thing is in the wind; for Councils not confirmed by the Pope, have no warrant that they shall not erre, and they not being confirmed, therefore saiid. But whether is the Popes confirmation after the Decree or before? It cannot be supposed before; for there is nothing to be confirmed till the Decree be made, and the Article composed. But if it be after, then possibly the Popes Decree may be requisite in solemnity of Law, and to make the Authority popular, publike and humane; but the Decree is true or false before the Popes confirmation, and is not at all altered by the supervening Decree, which being *postnate* to the Decree, alters not what went before, *Nunquam enim crescit ex postfacto praterini auctoritatis*, is the voyce both of Law and reason. So that it cannot make it divine, and necessary to be heartily believed. It may make it lawfull, not make it true, that is, it may possibly
by

by ſuch meanes become a Law but not a truth. I ſpeak now upon ſuppoſition the Popes confirmation were neceſſary, and requir'd to the making of conciliary and neceſſary ſanctions. But if it were, the caſe were very hard: For ſuppoſe a hereſy ſhould invade, and poſſeſſe the Chaire of *Rome*, what remedy can the Church have in that caſe, if a Generall Councell be of no Authority without the Pope confirm it? will the Pope confirm a Councell againſt himſelfe; will he condemn his own hereſy? That the Pope may be a Heretick appears in the * Canon Law, which ſayes he may for hereſy be depoſed, and therefore by a Councell which in this caſe hath plenary Authority without the Pope. And therefore in the Synod at *Rome* held under Pope *Adrian* the Second, the Censure of the Sixth Synod againſt *Honorius* who was convict of hereſy, is approved with this Appendix, that in this caſe the caſe of hereſy, *minores poſſunt de majoribus judicare*: And therefore if a Pope were above a Councell, yet when the Queſtion is concerning hereſy, the caſe is altered; the Pope may be judg'd by his inferiours, who in this caſe which is the maine caſe of all, become his Superiours. And it is little better then impudence to pretend that all Councells were confirmed by the Pope, or that there is a neceſſity in reſpect of divine obligation, that any ſhould be confirmed by him, more then by another of the Patriarchs. For the Councell of *Chalcedon* it ſelfe one of thoſe four which *S. Gregory* did revere next to the ſoure Evangelists, is rejected by Pope *Leo*, who in his 53 Epistle to *Anatolius*, and in his 54 to *Martian*, and in his 55 to *Pulcheria*, accuses it of ambition and inconfiderate temerity, and therefore no fit Aſſembly for the habitation of the holy Spirit, and *Gelaſius* in his Tome de vinculo *Anathematis*, affirms that the Councell is in part to be receiv'd, in part to be rejected, and compares it to hereticall books of a mixt matter, and proves his aſſertion by the place of *S. Paul*, *Omnia probate, quod bonum eſt retinete*. And *Bellarmin* ſayes the ſame; *In Concilio Chalcedonenſi quedam ſunt bona, quedam mala, quedam recipienda, quedam rejicienda, in & in libris hereticorum*, and if any thing be falſe, then all is Queſtionable and judicable and diſcernable, and not inſalſible antecedently. And however, that Councell hath *ex poſt facto*, and by the

* Diſt. 40. Can. ſi Papa.

De lictis, l. 3. c. 20. § ad hoc ult.

Evagr. lib. 3.
cap. 30.

voluntary conſenting of after Ages obtained great reputation ; yet they that lived immediately after it , that obſerved all the circumſtances of the thing, and the diſabilities of the perſons, and the uncertainty of the truth of its decrees , by reaſon of the un-concludingneſſe of the Arguments brought to atteſt it, were of another mind, *Quod autem ad Concilium Chalcedonenſe attinet, illud id temporis (viz. Anaſtaſii Imp.) neq; palam in Eccleſiis ſanctiſſimis predicatum fuit, neq; ab omnibus rejeſtum, nam ſinguli Eccleſiarum preſides pro ſuo arbitratu in ea re egerunt.* And ſo did all men in the world that were not maſter'd with prejudices and undone in their underſtanding with accidentall imper-tinencies ; they judg'd upon thoſe grounds which they had and ſaw, and ſuffered not themſelves to be bound to the imperious dictates of other men, who are as uncertain in their determi-nations as other in their Queſtions. And it is an evidence that there is ſome deception, and notable errour either in the thing or in the manner of their proceeding, when the Decrees of a Councell ſhall have no authority from the Compilers, nor no ſtrength from the reaſonableneſſe of the deciſion, but from the accidentall approbation of Poſterity : And if Poſterity had pleaſed, *Origen* had believed well and been an Orthodox per-ſon. And it was pretty ſport to ſee that *Papias* was right for two Ages together , and wrong ever ſince ; and juſt ſo it was in Councils, particularly in this of *Chalcedon* , that had a fate alterable according to the Age, and according to the Climate, which to my underſtanding is nothing elſe but an Argument that the buſineſſe of infallibility is a later device, and com-menc'd to ſerve ſuch ends as cannot be juſtified by true and ſubſtantiall grounds, and that the Pope ſhould confirm it as of neceſſity, is a fit cover for the ſame diſh.

Numb. 4.

In the ſixth Generall Councell, *Honorius* Pope of *Rome* was condemned ; did that Councell ſtay for the Popes Confirmation before they ſent forth their Decree ? Certainly they did not think it ſo needfull, as that they would have ſuſpended or caſtated the Decree, in caſe the Pope had then diſavowed it : For beſides the condemnation of Pope *Honorius* for hereſy, the 13th and 55th Canons of that Councell are expreſſely againſt the cuſtome of the Church of *Rome*. But this particular is in-volved

volved in that new Queſtion, whether the Pope be above a Councell, Now ſince the Conteſtation of this Queſtion, there was never any free or lawfull Councell that determin'd for the Pope, it is not likely any ſhould, and is it likely that any Pope will confirm a Councell that does not? For the Councell of *Baſil* is therefore condemn'd by the laſt Lateran which was an Aſſembly in the Popes own Palace, and the Councell of *Conſtance* is of no value in this Queſtion, and ſlighted in a juſt proportion, as that Article is diſbelieved. But I will not much trouble the Queſtion with a long conſideration of this particular; the preſence is ſenſeleſſe and illiterate, againſt reaſon and experience, and already determin'd by S. *Auſtin* ſufficiently as to this particular, *Ecce putemus illos Episcopos qui Rome judicaverunt non bonos judices fuiſſe, Reſtabat adhuc plenarium Eccleſia univerſa Concilium ubi etiam cum ipſis iudicibus cauſa poſſit agitari, ut ſi male judicaſſe conviſti eſſent, eorum ſententia ſolverentur.* For ſince Popes may be parties, may be Simoniacks, Schiſmaticks, Hereticks, it is againſt reaſon that in their own cauſes, they ſhould be judges, or that in any cauſes they ſhould be ſuperior to their judges. And as it is againſt reaſon, ſo is it againſt all experience too; for the Councell *Sinveſſanum* (as it ſaid) was conven'd to take Cogniſance of Pope *Marcellinus*; and divers Councels were held at *Rome* to give judgement in the cauſes of *Damaſus*, *Sixtus* the III, *Symmachus*, and *Leo* III and IV, as is to be ſeen in *Platina*, and the *Tomes* of the Councels. And it is no answer to this and the like allegations to ſay in matters of fact and humane conſtitution, the Pope may be judg'd by a Councell, but in matters of Faith all the world muſt ſtand to the Popes determination and authoritative deciſion: For if the Pope can by any colour pretend to any thing, it is to a ſuprem Judicature in matters Eccleſiaſtical, poſitive and of fact; and if he failes in this pretence, he will hardly hold up his head for any thing elſe; for the ancient Biſhops deriv'd their Faith from the fountaine, and held that in the higheſt renure, even from Chriſt their Head; but by reaſon of the Imperiall City it became the principall Seat, and he ſurpriz'd the higheſt Judicature, partly by the conſeſſion of others, partly by his own accidentail advantages, and yet even in theſe things although.

* Vid. poſtea de Concil. Sinveſſano. §.6. N.9.

Epist. 162. ad. Glorium.

* Vide Concil. Chalced. ad. 153.

Act. ult. can. 21.

although he was *major ſingularis*, yet he was *minor univerſis*: And this is no more then what was decreed of the eighth Generall Synod; which if it be ſenſe, is pertinent to this Queſtion; for Generall Councils are appointed to take Cognizance of Queſtions and differences about the Biſhop of *Rome*, *non tamen audacter in eum ferre ſententiam*: By *audacter*, as is ſuppoſed, is meant *precipitanter* haſtily and unreaſonably; but if to give ſentence againſt him bee wholly forbidden, it is non-ſenſe, for to what purpoſe is an Authority of taking Cognizance, if they have no power of giving ſentence, unleſſe it were to deſerre it to a ſuperiour Judge, which in this caſe cannot be ſuppoſed? for either the Pope himſelfe is to judge his own cauſe after their examination of him, or the Generall Councell is to judge him: So that although the Councell is by that Decree enjoyn'd to proceed modeſtly and warily, yet they may proceed to ſentence, or elſe the Decree is ridiculous and impertinent.

Numb. 5.

But to cleare all, I will inſtance in matters of Queſtion and opinion: For not only ſome Councils have made their Decrees without or againſt the Pope, but ſome Councils have had the Popes confirmation, and yet have not been the more legitimate or obligatoty, but are known to be hereticall. For the Canons of the ſixth Synod although ſome of them were made againſt the Popes, and the cuſtome of the Church of *Rome*, a Pope a while after did confirm the Councell, and yet the Canons are impious and hereticall, and ſo eſteem'd by the Church of *Rome* her ſelfe. I inſtance in the ſecond Canon which approves of that Synod of *Carthage* under *Cyprian* for rebaptization of Hereticks, and the 72 Canon that diſſolves marriage between perſons of differing perſwaſion in matters of Chriſtian Religion; and yet theſe Canons were approved by Pope *Adrian I.* who in his Epistle to *Tharaſius*, which is in the ſecond action of the ſeventh Synod, calls them *Canones divini & legaliter predicatos*. And theſe Canons were uſed by Pope *Nicholas I.* in his Epistle ad *Michaellem*, and by *Innocent III. c. à multis. extra. de atat. ordinandorum*. So that now (that wee may apply this) there are ſeven Generall Councils which by the Church of *Rome* are condemn'd
of

of error. The * Councell of *Antioch*, A.D. 345. in which S. *Athanaſius* was condemn'd : The Councell of *Millaine* A.D. 354. of above 300 Biſhops : The Councell of *Ariminum*, conſiſting of 600 Biſhops : The ſecond Councell of *Ephesus*, A.D. 449. in which the *Emyſchian* hereſy was confirmed, and the Patriarch *Flavianus* kild by the faction of *Dioſcorus* : The Councell of *Conſtantinople* under *Leo Iſaurus*, A.D. 730 : And another at *Conſtantinople* 35 years after : And laſtly, the Councel at *Piſa* 134 years ſince. Now that theſe Generall Councels are condemn'd, is a ſufficient Argument that Councels may erre ; and it is no answer to ſay they were not confirm'd by the Pope ; for the Popes confirmation I have ſhewn not to be neceſſary, or if it were, yet even that alſo is an Argument that Generall Councels may become invalid, either by their own fault, or by ſome extrinſecall ſupervening accident, either of which evacuates their Authority ; and whether all that is required to the legitimatiſation of a Councell, was actually obſerv'd in any Councell, is ſo hard to determine, that no man can be infallibly ſure that ſuch a Councell is authentick and ſufficient probation.

2. And that is the ſecond thing I ſhall obſerve, There are ſo many Queſtions concerning the efficient, the forme, the matter of Generall Councels, and their manner of proceeding, and their final ſanction, that after a Queſtion is determin'd by a Conciliary Aſſembly, there are perhaps twenty more Queſtions to be diſputed before we can with confidence either believe the Councell upon its meere Authority, or obtrude it upon others. And upon this ground, how eaſy it is to elude the preſſure of an Argument drawn from the Authority of a Generall Councell, is very remarkable in the Queſtion about the Popes or the Councels Superiority, which Queſtion although it be defin'd for the Councell againſt the Pope by five Generall Councels, the Councell of *Florence*, of *Conſtance*, of *Basile*, of *Piſa*, and one of the *Lateran's*, yet the Jeſuites to this day, account this Queſtion *pro non definita*, and have rare pretences for their eſcape ; as firſt, It is true, a Councell is above a Pope, in caſe there be no Pope, or he uncertain ; which is *Bellarmino's* answer, never conſidering whether he ſpake ſenſe or no,

*Vid. Socra. l. 1. c. 5. & Sozom. l. 3. c. 5.

Gregor. in Regiſt. li. 3. cauſ. 7. ait. Concilium Numidix erreſſe. Concilium Aquigra. ni erravit. De raptore & raptâ diſt. 20. can. de libellis. in gloſſa.

Numb. 6.

T.

2. nor yet remembering that the Councell of *Baſil* depoſed *Eugenius* who was a true Pope and ſo acknowledg'd. Secondly, ſometimes the Pope did not confirm theſe Councells, that's their Answer: (And although it was an exception that the Fathers never thought of, when they were preſſed with the Authority of the Councell of *Ariminum* or *Syrminum*, or any other *Arrian* Convention;) yet the Councell of *Baſil* was conven'd by Pope *Martin V.* then, in its ſixteenth Seſſion, declar'd by *Eugenius* the IV. to be lawfully continued and confirmed expreſſly in ſome of its Decrees by Pope *Nicholas*; and ſo ſtood till it was at laſt rejeſted by *Leo X.* very many years after; but that came too late, and with too viſible an intereſt; and this Councell did decree *fide Catholica tenendum Concilium eſſe ſupra Papam*: But if one Pope confirms it, and another rejeſts it, as it happened in this caſe and in many more, does it not deſtroy the competency of the Authority? and we ſee it by this inſtance, that it ſo ſerves the turns of men, that it is good in ſome caſes, that is, when it makes for them, and invalid when it makes againſt them.
3. Thirdly, but it is a little more ridiculous in the caſe of the Councell of *Conſtance*, whoſe Decrees were confirm'd by *Martin V.* But that this may be no Argument againſt them, *Bellarmino* tells you he only confirm'd thoſe things *quæ facta fuerant Conciliariter, re diligenter examinata*, of which there being no mark, nor any certain Rule to judge it, it is a device that may evacuate any thing we have a mind to, it was not done *Conciliariter*, that is, not according to our mind; for *Conciliariter* is a fine new nothing, that may ſignifie what you pleaſe.
4. Fourthly, but other devices yet more pretty they have: As, Whether the Councell of *Lateran* was a Generall Councell or no, they know not, (no nor will not know) which is a wiſe and plaine reſervation of their own advantages, to make it Generall or not Generall, as ſhall ſerve their turns.
5. Fifthly, as for the Councell of *Florence*, they are not ſure, whether it hath deſin'd the Queſtion *ſatis aperte*; *aperte* they will grant, if you will allow them not *ſatis aperte*. Sixthly and laſtly, the Councell of *Piſa* is *neg, approbatum neq, reprobatum*, which is the greateſt folly of all and moſt prodigious vanity; ſo that by ſomething or other, either they were not conven'd lawfully, or
- they

they did not proceed *Councilariter*, or 'tis not certain that the Councell was Generall or no, or whether the Councell were *approbatum*, or *reprobatum*, or else it is *partim confirmatum partim reprobatum*, or else it is *neq; approbatum neq; reprobatum*; By one of theſe wayes or a device like to theſe, all Councils and all Decrees ſhall be made to ſignifie nothing, and to have no Authority.

3. There is no Generall Councell that hath determined *Numb. 7.* that a Generall Councell is infallible: No Scripture hath recorded it; no Tradition univerſall hath transmitted to us any ſuch propoſition; So that we muſt receive the Authority at a lower rate, and upon a leſſe probability then the things conſigned by that Authority. And it is ſtrange that the Decrees of Councils ſhould be eſteem'd authentick and infallible, and yet it is not infallibly certain, that the Councils themſelves are infallible, becauſe the beliefe of the Councils infallibility is not prov'd to us by any medium, but ſuch as may deceive us.

4. But the beſt inſtance that Councils are ſome and may all be deceived, is the contradiction of one Councell to another; for in that caſe both cannot be true, and which of them is true, muſt belong to another judgement, which is leſſe then the ſolemnity of a Generall Councell; and the determination of this matter can be of no greater certainty after it is concluded, then when it was propounded as a Queſtion, being it is to be determin'd by the ſame Authority or by a leſſe then it ſelfe. But for this allegation, we cannot want inſtances; The Councell of *Trent* allowes picturing of God the Father; The Councell of *Nice* altogether diſallowes it; The ſame *Nicene* Councell, which was the ſeventh Generall, allows of picturing *Self: 5.* Chriſt in the form of a Lamb; But the ſixth Synod by no means will endure it, as *Caranza* affirms: The Councell of *Neocaſarea* confirm'd by *Leo IV. diſt. 20. de libellis*, and approv'd *Aſ. 2.* by the firſt *Nicene* Councell as it is ſaid in the ſeventh Seſſion of the Councell of *Florence*, forbids ſecond Marriages and impoſes Penances on them that are married the ſecond time, forbidding Priests to be preſent at ſuch Marriage Feaſts: Beſides, that this is expreſſy againſt the Doctrin of *S. Paul*, it is alſo againſt *Can. 82.*

Cap. I.

L. 17. de cul.
Dei, c. 20.L. 1. de bapt.
Donat, c. 3.

the Doctine of the Councell of *Laodicea* which took off ſuch Penances, and pronounc'd ſecond Marriages to be free and lawfull : Nothing is more diſcrepant then the third Councell of *Carthage* and the Councell of *Laodicea*, about aſſignation of the Canon of Scripture, and yet the ſixth Generall Synod approves both : And I would faine know if all Generall Councils are of the ſame mind with the Fathers of the Councell of *Carthage*, who reckon into the Canon five Books of *Solomon*. I am ſure *S. Auſtin* reckon'd but three, and I think all Chriſtendom beſide are of the ſame opinion. And if we look into the title of the Law *de Conciliis*, call'd *Concordantia diſcordantium*, we ſhall find inſtances enough to confirm that the Decrees of ſome Councils are contradictory to others, and that no wit can reconcile them : And whether they did or no, that they might diſagree, and former Councils be corrected by later, was the beliefe of the Doctors in thoſe Ages in which the beſt and moſt famous Councils were conven'd, as appears in that famous ſaying of *S. Auſtin* ſpeaking concerning the rebaptizing of Hereticks ; and how much the *Africans* were deceived in that Queſtion, he answers the Allegation of the Biſhops Letters, and thoſe Nationall Councils which confirmed *S. Cyprians* opinion by ſaying that they were no finall determination. For *Episcoporum litera emendari poſſunt à Conciliis nationalibus, Concilia nationalia à plenariis, ipſaq; plenaria priora à poſterioribus emendari*. Not only the occaſion of the Queſtion being a matter not of fact, but of Faith, as being inſtanc'd in the Queſtion of rebaptization : but alſo the very ſabrick and æconomy of the words, put by all the answers of thoſe men who think themſelves preſſed with the Authority of *S. Auſtin*. For as Nationall Councils may correct the Biſhops Letters, and Generall Councils may correct Nationall, ſo the later Generall may correct the former, that is, have contrary and better Decrees of manners, and better determinations in matters of faith. And from hence hath riſen a Queſtion whether is to be received the former or the later Councils, in caſe they contradict each other. The former are nearer the fountaines Apoſtolickall, the later are of greater conſideration ; The firſt, have more Authority, the later more reaſon ; The firſt are more venerable, the later more inquisitive and ſeeing.

And

And now what rule ſhall we have to determine our beliefs, whether to Authority, or Reason, the Reason and the Authority both of them not being the higheſt in their kinde, both of them being repudiable, and at moſt but probable? And here it is that this great uncertainty is ſuch as not to determine any body, but fit to ſerve every body; and it is ſport to ſee that *Bellarmino* will by all means have the Council of *Carthage* prefer'd before the Council of *Laodicea*, becauſe it is later, and yet he preferres the ſecond *Nicene* * Council before the Council of *Frankfurt*, becauſe it is elder: *S. Auſtin* would have the former Generals to be mended by the later; but *Iſidore* in *Gratian* ſayes when Councils doe differ *ſtandum eſſe antiquioribus*, the elder muſt carry it: And indeed theſe probables are buſkins to ſerve every foot, and they are like *magnum & parvum*, they have nothing of their own, all that they have is in comparison of others; ſo theſe topicks have nothing of reſolute and dogmaticall truth, but in relation to ſuch ends as an intereſſed perſon hath a mind to ſerve upon them.

§. 5. There are many Councils corrupted, and many pretended and alledged, when there were no ſuch things, both which make the topick of the Authority of Councils to be little and inconsiderable: There is a Council brought to light in the edition of Councils by *Binius*, viz. *Sinveſſanum*, pretended to be kept in the year 303, but it was ſo private till then, that we find no mention of it in any ancient Record: Neither *Eusebius*, nor *Ruffinus*, *S. Hierom*, nor *Socrates*, *Sozomen*, nor *Theodoret*, nor *Euſtrophius*, nor *Bede* knew any thing of it, and the eldeſt allegation of it is by Pope *Nicholas* I, in the ninth Century. And he that ſhall conſider that 300 Biſhops in the miſt of horrid Perſecutions (for ſo then they were) are pretended to have conven'd, will need no greater Argument to ſuſpect the impoſture; beſides, he that was the framer of the engine did not lay his ends together handſomely, for it is ſaid that the depoſition of *Marcellinus* by the Synod was told to *Diocletian*, when he was in the *Persian* Warre, when as it is known before that time he had return'd to *Rome*, and triumph'd for his *Persian* Conqueſt as *Eusebius* in his Chronicle reports: And this is ſo plain that *Binius* and *Baronius* pretend the Text to be corrupted, & to go to * mend

L. 2. de Conc.
c. 8. § respon-
deo in primis.
* Ibid. § de
Concilio an-
tem.
Diſt. 20. Can.
Domino San-
cto.

Numb. 9.

* Pro [cum
eſſet in bello
Perſarum] le-
gi volunt [cum
reverſus eſſet à
bello Perſa-
rum] *Euseb.
Chronicon. vide
BINIUM in no-
tis ad Concil.
Sinveſſanum.
Tom. 1. Concil.
& Baron. An-
nal. Tom. 3.
A.D. 303, NUMB.*

L.ſ. Ep. 14.
ad Narſeni.

Comment. in
Hebr.

^a Con. Car-
thag. VI. cap. 9.
^b Con. African.
c. 102.
^c c. 133.
^d Lib. 1. Eccl.
Hiſt. c. 6.
^e In princ.
Con. de Synod.
Princ.
^f Baronius,
tom. 3. A. D.
315. n. 156.
Tom. 3. ad
A. D. 325. n. 62
^g 3.
^g Panopl. 1.2.
c. 6.

it by ſuch an emendation as is a plain contradiction to the ſenſe, and that ſo un-clerk-like, viz. by putting in two words and leaving out one, which whether it may be allowed them by any licence leſſe then Poeticall let Criticks judge. S. Gregory ſaith that the *Conſtantinopolitans* had corrupted the Synod of *Chalcedon*, and that he ſuſpected the ſame concerning the *Ephesine* Councell: And in the fifth Synod there was a notorious prevarication, for there were falſe Epistles of Pope *Vigilius* and *Menna* the Patriarch of *Conſtantinople* inserted, and ſo they paſſed for authentick till they were diſcovered in the ſixth Generall Synod, Actions the 12. and 14: And not only falſe Decrees and Actions may ereep into the Codes of Councils; but ſometimes the authority of a learned man may abuſe the Church with pretended Decrees, of which there is no Copy or ſhadow in the Code it ſelfe: And thus *Thomas Aquinas* ſayes that the Epistle to the *Hebrewes* was reckoned in the Canon by the *Nicene* Councell, no ſhadow of which appears in thoſe Copies we now have of it; and this pretence and the reputation of the man prevail'd ſo farre with *Melchior Canus* the learned Biſhop of *Canaries*, that he believ'd it upon this ground, *Vir ſanctus rem adeo gravem non aſtrueret, niſi compertum habuiſſet*; and there are many things which have prevail'd upon leſſe reaſon and a more ſlight Authority. And that very Councell of *Nice*, hath not only been pretended by *Aquinas*, but very much abuſed by others, and its Authority and great reputation hath made it more lyable to the fraud and pretences of idle people: For whereas the *Nicene* Fathers made but twenty Canons, for ſo many and no more were received by ^a *Cecilian* of *Carthage*, that was at *Nice* in the Councell; by ^b *S. Auſtin*, and 200 *African* Biſhops with him, by ^c *S. Cyrill* of *Alexandria*, by ^d *Atticus* of *Conſtantinople*, by *Ruffinus*, ^e *Iſidore* and *Theodore*, as ^f *Baronius* witneſſes, yet there are fourſcore lately found out in an *Arabian* M. S. and publiſhed in Latine by *Turrian* and *Alſonſus* of *Piſa* Jeſuites ſurely, and like to be maſters of the mint. And not only the Canons, but the very Acts of the *Nicene* Councell are falſe and ſpurious, and are ſo confeſſed by *Baronius*; though how he and ^g *Lindanus* will be reconcil'd upon the point, I neither know well nor much care.

Now

Now if one Councell be corrupted, we ſee by the inſtance of *S. Gregory*, that another may be ſuſpected and ſo all; becauſe he found the Councell of *Chalcedon* corrupted, he ſuſpected alſo the *Ephesine*, and another might have ſuſpected more, for the *Nicene* was tampered foully with, and ſo three of the ſoure Generals were ſullied and made ſuſpicious, and therefore we could not be ſecure of any; If falſe Acts be inſerted in one Councell, who can truſt the actions of any, unleſſe he had the keeping the Records himſelfe, or durſt ſwear for the Register: And if a very learned man (as *Thomas Aquinas* was,) did either wilfully deceive us, or was himſelfe ignorantly abuſed in Allegation of a Canon which was not, it is but a very fallible Topick at the beſt, and the moſt holy man that is, may be abuſed himſelfe, and the wiſeſt may deceive others.

6. And laſtly, To all this and to the former inſtances, by way of Corollary, I adde ſome more particulars in which it is notorious that Councels Generall, and Nationall, that is, ſuch as were either Generall by Originall, or by adoption into the Canon of the Catholike Church did erre; and were actually deceived. The firſt Councell of *Toledo* admits to the Communion him that hath a Concubine, ſo he have no wife beſides, and this Councell is approved by Pope *Leo* in the 92 Epistle to *Rufinus* Biſhop of *Narbona*: *Gratian* ſayes that the Councell meanes by a Concubine, a wife married *sine dote & ſolemnitate*; but this is dawbing with untemper'd mortar. For though it was a cuſtome amongſt the Jewes to diſtinguiſh Wives from their Concubines, by Dowry and legall Solemnities, yet the Chriſtian diſtinguiſhed them no otherwiſe, then as lawfull and unlawfull, then as Chaſtity and Fornication: And beſides, if by a Concubine is meant a lawfull wife without a Dowry, to what purpoſe ſhould the Councell make a Law that ſuch a one might be admitted to the Communion? for I ſuppoſe it was never thought to be a Law of Chriſtianity, that a man ſhould have a Portion with his Wife, nor he that married a poore Virgin ſhould deſerve to be Excommunicate. So that *Gratian* and his Followers are preſt ſo with this Canon, that to avoid the impiety of it, they expound it to a ſignification without ſenſe or purpoſe. But the buſineſſe then was, that Adultery

Numb. 10.

Dist. 34. can. omnitus.

Cap. 3.

^a Part. 3. q. 80:
^a 6. ad 3m.
^b Can. 72.
^c Can ego
 Berengar. de
 consecrat. dist.
 2.

Lib. 2. c. 8. de
 Concil.

was so publike and notorious a practise that the Councell did chuse rather to endure simple Fornication, that by such permission of a lesse, they might slacken the publike custome of a greater, just as at *Rome* they permit Stewes to prevent unnaturall finnes; But that by a publike sanction Fornicators, habitually and notoriously such, should be admitted to the holy Communion was an act of Priests, so unfit for Priests, that no excuse can make it white or cleane. The Councell of *Wormes* does authorize a superstitious custome at that time too much used, of discovering stoln goods by the holy Sacrament, which ^a *Aquinas* justly condemns for Superstition. The ^b sixth Synod separates persons lawfully married upon an accusation and crime of heresy: The Roman Councell under ^c Pope *Nicholas II.* defin'd that not only the Sacrament of Christs body, but the very body it selfe of our blessed Saviour is handled and broke by the hands of the Priest, and chewed by the teeth of the Communicants, which is a manifest error derogatory from the truth of Christs beatificall Resurrection, and glorification in the Heavens, and disavowed by the Church of *Rome* it selfe: But *Bellarmino* that answers all the Arguments in the world, whither it be possible or not possible, would faine make the matter faire, and the Decree tolerable, for sayes he, the Decree meanes that the body is broken not in it selfe but in the sign, and yet the Decree sayes that not only the Sacrament (which if any thing be, is certainly the sign) but the very body it selfe is broken and champ'd with hands and teeth respectively; which indeed was nothing but a plaine over-acting the Article in contradiction to *Berengarius*. And the answer of *Bellarmino* is not sense; for he denies that the body it selfe is broken in it selfe (that was the error we charg'd upon the Roman Synod) and the sign abstracting from the body is not broken, (for that was the opinion that Councell condemn'd in *Berengarius*) but sayes *Bellarmino*, the body in the sign: What's that? for neither the sign, nor the body, nor both together are broken: For if either of them distinctly, they either rush upon the error which the Roman Synod condemn'd in *Berengarius*, or upon that which they would faine excuse in Pope *Nicholas*; but if both are broken then 'tis true to affirm it

it of either, and then the Councell is blasphemous in saying that Christ's glorified body is passible and frangible by natural manducation: So that it is and it is not, it is not this way, and yet it is no way else, but it is some way, and they know not how, and the Councell spoke blasphemy, but it must be made innocent; and therefore, it was requisite a cloud of a distinction should be raised, that the unwary Reader might be amused, and the Decree scape untoucht; but the truth is, they that undertake to justify all that other men say, must be more subtle then they that said it, and must use such distinctions which possibly the first Authors did not understand. But I will multiply no more instances, for what instance soever I shall bring, some or other will be answering it, which thing is so farre from satisfying me in the particulars, that it increases the difficulty in the generall, and satisfies me in my first beliefe: For *if no Decrees of Councils can make against them though they seeme never so plain against them, then let others be allowed the same liberty, (and there is all the reason in the world they should) and no Decree shall conclude against any Doctrine; that they have already entertain'd; and by this means the Church is no fitter instrument to Decree Controversies then the Scripture* it selfe, there being as much obscurity and disputing in the sense, and the manner, and the degree, and the competency, and the obligation of the Decree of a Councell, as of a place of Scripture. And what are we the nearer for a Decree, if any Sophister shall think his elusion enough to contest against the Authority of a Councell? yet this they doe, that pretend highest for their Authority, which consideration or some like it might possibly make *Gratian* preferre *S. Hierom's* single Testimony before a whole Councell, because hee had Scripture of his side; which sayes, that the Authority of Councils is not *authoritas*, and that Councils may possibly recede from their Rule, from Scripture; and in that case, a single person proceeding according to Rule is a better Argument; which indeed was the saying of *Panormitan*, in *concernentibus fidem etiam dictum unius privati esset dicto Pape aut totius Concilii preferendum, si ille moveretur melioribus Argumentis*.

* Illa demum
eis videntur
edicta & Con-
cilia quæ in
rem suam fa-
ciunt; reliqua
non pluris
æstimant
quam conven-
tum mulier-
cularum in
textrina vel
thermis. *Ludo.*
Vives in Sel. oliv.
lib. 10. Aug. de
Cicit. Dei.
c. 26.

36. q. 2. c. pla-
cuit.

Parr. 1. de ele-
ction. Et electi
potest. cap.
signi ficali.

Numb. 11.
Athanaſ. lib. de
Synod. Fruſtra
igitur circum-
curſantes
prætexunt ob-
ſidem ſe Syno-
dos poſtulare,
cum ſit Divina
Scriptura om-
nibus poten-
tior.

Heb. 13. 7.

I end this Diſcourſe with repreſenting the words of *Gregory Nazianzen* in his *Epistle to Procopius*; *Ego ſi vera ſcribere oportet ita animo affectus ſum, ut omnia Episcoporum Concilia fugiam, quoniam nullius Concilii ſinem laetum fanctumq; vidi, nec quod depulſionem malorum potius quam acceſſionem & incrementum habueris*: But I will not be ſo ſevere and dogmaticall againſt them: For I believe many Councils to have been cald with ſufficient Authority, to have been managed with ſingular piety and prudence, and to have been finiſhed with admirable ſucceſſe and truth. And where we find ſuch Councils, he that will not with all veneration believe their Decrees, and receive their ſanctions, underſtands not that great duty he owes to them who have the care of our ſoules, whoſe faith we are bound to follow (ſaith *S. Paul*) that is ſo long as they follow *Chriſt*, and certainly many Councils have done ſo: But this was then when the publike intereſt of *Chriſtendome* was better conſerv'd in determining a true Article, then in finding a diſcreet temper, or a wiſe expedient to ſatiſſie diſagreeing perſons; (As the Fathers at *Trent* did, and the *Lutherans* and *Calviniſts* did at *Sandomir* in *Polonia*; and the *Sublapſarians* and *Supralapſarians* did at *Dort*;) It was in Ages when the ſumme of Religion did not conſiſt in maintaining the Grandezza of the Papacy; where there was no order of men with a fourth Vow upon them to advance *S. Peters* Chaire; when there was no man, nor any company of men, that eſteem'd themſelves inſallible, and therefore they ſearched for truth as if they meant to find it, and would believe it if they could ſee it prov'd, not reſolv'd to prove it becauſe they had upon chance or intereſt believ'd it; then they had rather have ſpoken a truth, then upheld their reputation, but only in order to truth. This was done ſometimes, and when it was done, *Gpd's* Spirit never fail'd them, but gave them ſuch aſſiſtances as were ſufficient to that good end for which they were Aſſembled, and did implore his aid: And therefore it is that the ſoure generall Councils ſo called by way of eminency, have gained ſo great a reputation above all others, not becauſe they had a better promiſe, or more ſpeciall aſſiſtances, but becauſe they proceeded better according to the Rule, with leſſe faction

faction, without ambition and temporall ends.

And yet thoſe very Aſſemblies of Biſhops had no Authority by their Decrees to make a Divine Faith, or to conſtitute new objects of neceſſary Credence; they made nothing true that was not ſo before, and therefore they are to be apprehended in the nature of excellent Guides, and whoſe Decrees are moſt certainly to determine all thoſe who have no Argument to the contrary of greater force and efficacy then the Authority or reaſons of the Councell. And there is a duty owing to every Pariſh Prielt, and to every Dioceſan Biſhop; theſe are appointed over us and to answer for our ſoules, and are therefore morally to guide us, as reaſonable Creatures are to be guided, that is, by reaſon and diſcourſe: For in things of judgement and underſtanding, they are but in ſome next above Beaſts, that are to be ruled by the imperiouſneſſe and abſoluteneſſe of Authority, unleſſe the Authority be Divine, that is, inſallible. Now then in a juſter height, but ſtill in its true proportion, Aſſemblies of Biſhops are to guide us with a higher Authority, becauſe in reaſon it is ſuppoſed they will doe it better, with more Argument and certainty, and with Decrees, which have the advantage by being the reſults of many diſcourſes of very wiſe and good men: But that the Authority of generall Councils, was never eſteem'd abſolute, inſallible and unlimited, appears in this, that before they were obliging, it was neceſſary that each particular Church reſpectively ſhould accept them, *Concurrente univerſali totius Eccleſie conſenſu, &c. in declaratione veritatum quæ credenda ſunt &c.* That's the way of making the Decrees of Councils become authentik, and be turn'd into a Law as *Gerſon* obſerves; and till they did, their Decrees were but a dead letter (and therefore it is that theſe later Popes have ſo labour'd, that the Councell of *Trent* ſhould be received in *France*; and *Carolus Molinæus* a great Lawyer, and of the Roman Communion, diſputed * againſt the reception,) and this is a known condition in the Canon Law, but it proves plainly that the Decrees of Councils have their Authority from the voluntary ſubmiſſion of the particular Churches, not from the prime ſanction and conſtitution of the Councell. And there is great reaſon it ſhould; for as the repreſentative

Numb. 12.

Vid. S. Auguſt.
1. l. c. 18. de
bapt. contr.
Donat.

* So did the
third Eſtate of
France in the
Convention of
the three E-
ſtates under
Levis the 13th
earnestly con-
tend againſt it.

body of the Church derives all power from the diffuſive body which is repreſented, ſo it reſolves into it, and though it may have all the legall power, yet it hath not all the naturall; for more able men may be unient, then ſent; and they who are ſent may be wrought upon by ſtratagem, which cannot happen to the whole diffuſive Church; it is therefore moſt fit that ſince the legall power, that is, the externall was paſſed over to the body repreſentative, yet the efficacy of it; and the internall ſhould ſo ſtill remaine in the diffuſive, as to have power to conſider whether their repreſentatives did their duty yea or no, and ſo to proceed accordingly: For unleſſe it be in matters of juſtice, in which the intereſt of a third perſon is concern'd, no man will or can be ſuppoſed to paſſe away all power from himſelfe of doing himſelfe right, in matters perſonall proper, and of ſo high concernment: It is moſt unnaturall and unreaſonable. But beſides, that they are excellent inſtruments of peace, the beſt humane Judicatories in the world, rare Sermons for the determining a point in Controverſy, and the greateſt probability from humane Authority, beſides theſe advantages (I ſay) I know nothing greater that generall Councils can pretend to with reaſon and Argument ſufficient to ſatiſfie any wiſe man: And as there was never any Council ſo generall, but it might have been more generall; for in reſpect of the whole Church, even *Nice* it ſelfe was but a ſmall Aſſembly; ſo there is no Decree ſo well conſtituted, but it may be prov'd by an Argument higher then the Authority of the Council: And therefore generall Councils, and Nationall, and Provinciall, and Dioceſan in their ſeverall degrees, are excellent Guides for the Prophets and directions and inſtructions for their Propheſying, but not of weight and Authority to reſtraine their Liberty ſo wholly, but that they may diſſent when they ſee a reaſon ſtrong enough ſo to perſwade them, as to be willing upon the confidence of that reaſon and their own ſincerity, to anſwer to God for ſuch their modetty, and peaceable, but (as they believe) their neceſſary diſagreeing.

SECT. VII.

Of the fallibility of the Pope, and the uncertainty of his Expounding Scripture, and resolving Questions.

But since the Question between the Councell and the Pope *Numb. 1.* grew high, there have not wanted abettors so confident on the Popes behalfe, as to believe Generall Councils to be nothing but Pompes and Solemnities of the Catholike Church, and that all the Authority of determining Controversies is formally and effectually in the Pope. And therefore to appeale from the Pope to a future Councell is a heresy, yea, and Treason too said Pope *Pius II.* and therefore it concerns us now to be wise and wary. But before I proceed, I must needs remember that Pope *Pius II.* while he was the wise and learned *Aeneas Sylvius*, was very confident for the preheminance of a Councell, and gave a merry reason why more Clerks were for the Popes then the Councell, though the truth was on the other side, even because the Pope gives Bishopricks and Abbeys, but Councils give none; and yet as soone as he was made Pope, as if he had been inspired, his eyes were open to see the great priviledges of *S. Peters* Chaire, which before he could not see, being amused with the truth, or else with the reputation of a Generall Councell. But however, there are many that hope to make it good, that the Pope is the Universal and the infallible Doctor, that he breathes Decrees as Oracles, that to dissent from any of his Cathedrall determinations is absolute heresy, the Rule of Faith being nothing else but conformity to the Chaire of *Peter*. So that here we have met a restraint of Prophecy indeed; but yet to make amends, I hope we shall have an infallible Guide, and when a man is in Heaven, he will never complaine that his choyce is taken from him, and that he is confin'd to love and to admire, since his love and his admiration is fixt, upon that which makes him happy, even upon God himselfe. And in the Church of *Rome* there is in a lower degree, but in a true proportion as little cause to be troubled, that we are confin'd to believe just

Epist. ad No-
rimberg.
Patrum & a-
vorum no-
strorum tem-
pore puci au-
debant dicere
Papam esse
supra Conci-
lium. l. i. de
gestis Concil.
basil.

ſo, and no choice left us for our underſtandings to diſcover or our wills to chuſe, becauſe though we be limited, yet we are pointed out where we ought to reſt, we are confin'd to our Center, and there where our underſtandings will be ſatiſfied, and therefore will be quiet, and where after all our ſtrivings, ſtudies and endeavours we deſire to come, that is, to truth, for there we are ſecur'd to find it, becauſe we have a Guide that is infallible: If this prove true, we are well enough. But if it be falſe or uncertain, it were better we had ſtill kept our liberty, then be cozen'd out of it with gay pretences. This then we muſt conſider.

Numb. 2.

And here we ſhall be oppreſſed with a cloud of Witneſſes: For what more plaine then the Commiſſion given to Peter? *Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock will I build my Church. And to thee will I give the Keyes.* And again, *for thee have I prayed that thy faith faile not; but thou when thou art converted confirm thy brethren;* And again, *If thou loveſt me feed my ſheep:* Now nothing of this being ſpoken to any of the other Apoſtles, by one of theſe places S. Peter muſt needs be appointed Foundation or Head of the Church, and by conſequence he is to rule and govern all. By ſome other of theſe places he is made the ſupreme Paſtor, and he is to teach and determine all, and inabled with an infallible power ſo to doe: And in a right underſtanding^{of} theſe Authorities, the Fathers ſpeak great things of the Chaire of Peter; for we are as much bound to believe that all this was ſpoken to Peters Succeſſors, as to his Perſon; that muſt by all meanes be ſuppoſed, and ſo did the old Doctours, who had as much certainty of it as we have, and no more; but yet let's hear what they have ſaid, *To this Church by reaſon of its more powerfull principality, it is neceſſary all Churches round about ſhould Convene: In this, Tradition Apoſtolicall alwayes was obſerved, and therefore to communicate with this Biſhop with this Church, was to be in Communion with the Church Catholike: . . . To this Church error or perfidiouſneſſe cannot have acceſſe: . . . Againſt this Sea the gates of Hell cannot prevaile: . . . And whoever eats the Lamb not within this Houſe, is prophane; he that is not in the Ark of Noah*

* Irenæ. contra. hæreſ. l. 3.

c. 3.

* Ambr. de obitu Salyri, &

L. 1. Ep. 4. ad Imp. Cypr. Ep.

52.

b Cypr. Ep. 55. ad Cornel.

c S. Auſtin. in Pſal. contra partem Donat.

d Hieron. Ep. 57. ad Dama-

ſim.

BB BB

BB BB

Noah perishes in the inundation of waters. He that gathers not with this Bishop he scatters; and he that belongeth not to Christ, must needs belong to Antichrist. And that's his finall sentence: But if you would have all this prov'd by an infallible Argument, *c Optatus of Milevis in Africa* supplies it to us from the very name of *Peter*: For therefore Christ gave him the cognomination of *Cephas* ἀπὸ τῆς κειράνης, to shew that *S. Peter* was the visible Head of the Catholike Church. *Dignum patellæ operculum!* This long harangue must needs be full of tragedy to all them that take liberty to themselves to follow Scripture and their best Guides, if it happens in that liberty that they depart from the perswasions or the Communion of *Rome*: But indeed, if with the peace of the Bishops of *Rome* I may say it, this Scene is the most unhand somely laid, and the worst carried of any of those pretences that have lately abused Christendome.

c L. 2. contra
Palmenian.

I. Against the Allegations of Scripture, I shall lay no greater prejudice then this, that if a person dis-interested should see them, and consider what the products of them might possibly be, the last thing that he would think of, would be how that any of these places should serve the ends or pretences of the Church of *Rome*: For to instance in one of the particulars, that man had need have a strong fancy who imagines that because Christ pray'd for *S. Peter*, that (being he had design'd him to be one of those upon whose preaching and Doctrine he did meane to constitute a Church) that his faith might not faile, (for it was necessary that no bitterness or stopping should be in one of the first springs, least the current be either spoil'd or obstructed) that therefore the faith of Pope *Alexander VI.* or *Gregory*, or *Clement* 1500 years after, should be preserved by virtue of that prayer, which the forme of words, the time, the occasion, the manner of the address, the effect it selfe, and all the circumstances of the action and person did determine to be personall: And when it was more then personall, *S. Peter* did not represent his Successors at *Rome*, but the whole Catholike Church, sayes *Aquinas* and the Divines of the University of *Paris*, *Volunt enim pro solâ Ecclesiâ esse oratum*, sayes *Bellarmino* of them, and the glosse upon the Canon

Numb. 3.

22. q. 2. a. 6.
22. 6. ad 3 m.

L. 4. de Ro-
man. Pont. c. 3.

Lay.

§ 1.

Caus. 21. cap.
directa. q. 1.

29. dist. Ana-
stasius 60. dist.
si Papa.

Law plainly denies the effect of this prayer at all to appertain to the Pope: *Quere de qua Ecclesia intelligas quod hoc dicitur quod non possit errare, si de ipso Papà qui Ecclesia dicitur? sed certum est quod Papa errare potest . . . Respondeo ipsa Congregatio fidelium hic dicitur Ecclesia, & talis Ecclesia non potest non esse, nam ipse Dominus orat pro Ecclesia, & voluntate laborum suorum non fraudabitur.* But there is a little danger in this Argument when we well consider it; but it is likely to redound on the head of them whose turns it should serve: For it may be remembred that for all this prayer of Christ for S. Peter, the good man fell foully, and denyed his Master shamefully: And shall Christs prayer be of greater efficacy for his Successors, for whom it was made but indiretly and by consequence, then for himselfe, for whom it was directly and in the first intention? And if not, then for all this Argument, the Popes may deny Christ as well as their cheife and Deceſſor Peter. But it would not be forgotten how the Roman Doctors will by no means allow that S. Peter was then the cheife Bishop or Pope, when he denyed his Master. But then much lesse was he chosen cheife Bishop, when the prayer was made for him, because the prayer was made before his fall; that is, before that time in which it is confessed, he was not as yet made Pope: And how then the whole Succession of the Papacy should be intituled to it, passes the length of my hand to span. But then also if it be supposed and allowed, that these words shall intaile infallibility upon the Chaire of Rome, why shall not also all the Apostolicall Sees bee infallible as well as Rome? why shall not Constantinople or Byzantium where S. Andrew sate? why shall not Ephesus where S. John sate? or Jerusalem where S. James sate? for Christ prayed for them all, *ut Pater sanctificaret eos sua veritate*, Joh. 17.

Numb. 4.

2. For [*tibi dabo claves*,] was it personall or not? If it were, then the Bishops of Rome have nothing to doe with it: If it were not, then by what Argument will it be made evident that S. Peter, in the promise represented only his Successors, and not the whole Colledge of Apostles, and the whole Hierarchy? For if S. Peter was cheife of the Apostles, and Head of the Church, he might faire enough be the representative of the whole

whole Colledge, and receive it in their right as well as his own; which also is certain that it was so, for the same promise of binding and loosing, (which certainly was all that the Keyes were given for) was made afterward to all the Apostles, *Mat.* 18. and the power of remitting and retaining which in reason and according to the stile of the Church is the same thing in other words, was actually given to all the Apostles, and unless that was the performing the first and second promise, we find it not recorded in Scripture how or when or whether yet or no, the promise be performed: That promise I say which did not pertain to *Peter* principally and by origination, and to the rest by Communication, society and adherence, but that promise which was made to *Peter* first, but not for himselfe, but for all the Colledge, and for all their Successors, and then made the second time to them all, without representation, but in diffusion, and perform'd to all alike in presence except *S. Thomas*. And if he went to *S. Peter* to derive it from him, I know not; I find no record for that, but that Christ convey'd the promise to him by the same Commission, the Church yet never doubted, nor had she any reason. But this matter is too notorious: I say no more to it, but repeat the words and Argument of *S. Austin*, *Si hoc Petro tantum dictum est, non facit hoc Ecclesia*: If the Keyes were only given and so promised to *S. Peter*, that the Church hath not the Keyes, then the Church can neither bind nor loose, remit nor retaine, which God forbid; if any man should endeavour to answer this Argument, I leave him and *S. Austin* to contest it.

Tra. 50. in
Ioann.

3. For *pasce oves* there is little in that Allegation, besides the boldnesse of the Objectors; for were not all the Apostles bound to feed Christ's sheep? had they not all the Commission from Christ, and Christ's Spirit immediately? *S. Paul* had certainly; did not *S. Peter* himselfe say to all the Bishops of *Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia*, and *Bithinia*, that they should feed the flock of God, and the great Bishop and Shepherd should give them an immarcescible Crown; plainly implying, that from whence they derived their Authority, from him they were sure of a reward: In pursuance of which *S. Cyprian* laid his Argument upon this basis, *Nam cum statutum sit omnibus*

Numb. 5.

Li. 1. Epist. 3.

De agone
Chriſti, c. 30.

Epist. ad Atha-
naſ. apud
Athan. tom.
1. pag 42. Pa-
g. 6.

L. 10. Epist. 83.

nobis, &c. & ſingulis paſtoribus portio gregis, &c. Did not *S. Paul* call to the Biſhops of *Ephesus* to feed the flock of God, of which the holy Ghost hath made them Biſhops or Over-ſeers? and that this very Commiſſion was ſpoken to *Peter* not in a perſonall, but a publike capacity, and in him ſpoke to all the Apoſtles we ſee att-eſted by *S. Auſtin*, and *S. Ambroſe* and generally by all An-tiquity; and it ſo concern'd even every Pri-eſt that *Damaſus* was willing enough to have *S. Hierom* explicate many queſtions for him. And *Liberius* writes an Epistle to *Athanaſius* with much modeſty requiring his advice in a Queſtion of Faith, *ἵνα κατὰ πεποιθὸς ὁ ἀδελφεύων, &c. ὅτι ἀξίως καλέειν με.* That I alſo may be perſwaded without all doubting of thoſe things which you ſhall be pleaſed to command me. Now *Li-berius* needed not to have troubled himſelfe to have writ into the Eaſt to *Athanaſius*; for if he had but ſeated himſelfe in his Chaire, and made the dictate, the reſult of his pen and inke would certainly have taught him and all the Church; but that the good Pope was ignorant that either *paſce oves* was his own Charter, and Prerogative, or that any other words of Scripture had made him to be infallible, or if he was not ignorant of it, he did very ill to complement himſelfe out of it. So did all thoſe Biſhops of *Rome* that in that troubleſome and unprofitable Queſtion of Eaſter, being unſatisfied in the ſupputation of the *Egyptians*, and the definitions of the Mathe-maticall Biſhops of *Alexandria*, did yet require and intreat *S. Ambroſe* to tell them his opinion, as he himſelfe witneſſes; If *paſce oves* belongs only to the Pope by primary title, in theſe caſes the ſheep came to feed the Shepherd, which though it was well enough in the thing, is very ill for the pretenſions of the Roman Biſhops; and if we conſider how little many of the Popes have done toward feeding the ſheep of Chriſt, we ſhall hardly determine which is the greater prevarication, that the Pope ſhould claime the whole Commiſſion to be granted to him, or that the execution of the Commiſſion ſhould be wholly paſſed over to others; and it may be there is a my-ſtery init, that ſince *S. Peter* ſent a Biſhop with his ſtaffe to raiſe up a Diſciple of his from the dead, who was afterward Biſhop of *Triers*, the Popes of *Rome* never weare a Paſtorall ſtaffe.

ſtaffe except it be in that Dioceſſe (ſayes *Aquinas*) for great reaſon that he who does not, doe the office, ſhould not beare the Symbol; but a man would think that the Popes Maſter of the Ceremonies was ill adviſed not to aſſigne a Paſtorall ſtaffe to him, who pretends the Commiſſion of *paſce oves* to belong to him by prime right and origination. But this is not a buſineſſe to be merry in.

M.4. Sent.d:2.
24.

But the great ſupport is expected from *Tu es Petrus & ſuper hanc Petram adificabo Eccleſiam, &c.* Now there being ſo great difference in the expoſition of theſe words, by perſons diſ-interreſſed, who, if any, might be allowed to judge in this Queſtion, it is certain that neither one ſenſe nor other can be obruded for an Article of faith, much leſſe as a Catholicon inſtead of all, by conſtituting an Authority which ſhould guide us in all Faith, and determine us in all Queſtions: For if the Church was not built upon the perſon of *Peter*, then his Succeſſors can challenge nothing from this inſtance; now that it was the confeſſion of *Peter* upon which the Church was to rely for ever, we have witneſſes very credible, ^a *S. Ignatius*, ^b *S. Baſil*, ^c *S. Hilary*, ^d *S. Gregory Nyſſen*, ^e *S. Gregory the Great*, ^f *S. Auſtin*. ^g *S. Cyrill of Alexandria*, ^h *Iſidore Peluſiot*, and very many more. And although all theſe witneſſes concurring cannot make a propoſition to be true, yet they are ſufficient witneſſes, that it was not the Univerſall beſiefe of Chriſtendome that the Church was built upon *S. Peters* perſon. Cardinall *Perron* hath a fine fancy to elude this variety of Expoſition, and the conſequents of it; For (ſaith he) theſe Expoſitions are not contrary or excluſive of each other, but incluſive and conſequent to each other: For the Church is founded cauſally upon the confeſſion of *S. Peter*, formally upon the miniſtry of his perſon, and this was a reward or a conſequent of the former: So that theſe Expoſitions are both true, but they are conjoyn'd as mediate and immediate, direct and collaterall, literall and morall, originall and perpetuall, acceſſory and temporall, the one conſign'd at the beginning, the other introduc'd upon occaſion: For before the ſpring of the *Arrian* hereſy, the Fathers expounded theſe words of the perſon of *Peter*; but after the *Arrians* troubled them, the Fathers finding great Authority, and Energy in this confeſſion

Numb. 6.

^a Ad Philadelph.

^b Belucucorat;
25.

^c L. 4. de Trinit.

^d De Trinitate adverſ; Iudæos,

^e L. 3. Ep. 33.

^f In 1. Eph. Ioann. 4. r. 10.

^g De Trinit. l. 4.

^h L. 1. Ep. 235.

* Epist. ad
Philadelph.
In c. 16. Mat.
tra 9. 1.

of *Peter* for the establishment of the naturall filiation of the Son of God, to advance the reputation of these words and the force of the Argument, gave themselves licence to expound these words to the present advantage, and to make the confession of *Peter* to be the foundation of the Church, that if the *Arrians* should encounter this Authority, they might with more prejudice to their persons declaim against their cause by saying they overthrew the foundation of the Church. Besides that this answer does much dishonour the reputation of the Fathers integrity, and makes their interpretations lesse credible as being made not of knowledge or reason but of necessity and to serve a present turn, it is also false: For * *Ignatius* expounds it in a spirituall sense, which also the Liturgy attributed to *S. James* calls *ὁ ἀνίσταται ὁ κύριος*: And *Origen* expounds it mystically to a third purpose, but exclusively to this: And all these were before the *Arrian* Controversy. But if it be lawfull to make such unproved observations, it would have been to better purpose, and more reason to have observed it thus: The Fathers so long as the Bishop of *Rome* kept himselfe to the limits prescribed him by Christ, and indulged to him by the Constitution or concession of the Church, were unwary and apt to expound this place of the person of *Peter*; but when the Church began to enlarge her phylacteries by the favour of Princes, and the Sunshine of a prosperous fortune, and the Pope by the advantage of the Imperiall Seat, and other accidents began to invade upon the other Bishops and Patriarchs, then that he might have no colour from Scripture for such new pretensions, they did most generally turn the stream of their expositions from the person to the confession of *Peter*, and declar'd that to be the foundation of the Church. And thus I have requited fancy with fancy; but for the maine point, that these two Expositions are inclusive of each other, I find no warrant; for though they may consist together well enough, if Christ had so intended them; yet unlesse it could be shown by some circumstance of the Text, or some other extrinsecall Argument that they must be so, and that both senses were actually intended, it is but *gratis dictum* and a begging of the Question, to say that they are so, and the fancy so new, that when *S. Austin* had expounded

expounded this place of the person of *Peter*, he reviews it againe, and in his Retractions leaves every man to his liberty, which to take; as having nothing certaine in this Article: which had been altogether needlesse if he had believed them to be inclusively in each other, neither of them had need to have beene retracted, both were alike true, both of them might have been believed: But I said the fancy was new, and I had reason; for it was so unknown till yesterday, that even the late Writers of his own side, expound the words of the confession of *S. Peter* exclusively to his person or any thing else, as is to be seen in ^a *Marsilius*, ^b *Petrus de Aliaco* and the glosse upon *Dist. 19. can. ita Dominus*, § *us supra*, which also was the Interpretation of *Phavorinus Camers* their own Bishop, from whom they learnt the resemblance of the word *πίστος* and *πίστα*, of which they have made so many gay discourses, *πίστα τὸν ἐν πίστι ἀβραάμ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ ἐκ ἀποδομένης ψυχῆς ἐν τῷ ἡμετέριον θεμελίῳ ἀποθεμελιώμενον*.

^a De cens. pa-
cis part. 2. c. 28.
^b Recommend.
sacr. Script.

5. But upon condition I may have leave at another time to recede from so great and numerous Testimony of Fathers, I am willing to believe that it was not the confession of *S. Peter*, but his person upon which Christ said he would build his Church, or that these Expositions are consistent with and consequent to each other, that this confession was the objective foundation of Faith, and Christ and his Apostles the subjective, Christ principally, and *S. Peter* instrumentally; and yet I understand not any advantage will hence accrue to the Sea of *Rome*: For upon *S. Peter* it was built, but not alone, for it was upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets; *Jesus Christ* himselfe being the chief corner stone; and when *S. Paul* reckoned the Oeconomy of Hierarchie, he reckons not *Peter* first, and then the Apostles. But first Apostles, secondarily Prophets, &c. And whatsoever is first, either is before all things else, or at least nothing is before it: So that at least *S. Peter* is not before all the rest of the Apostles, which also *S. Paul* expressly averses, *I am in nothing inferior to the very chiefest of the Apostles*, no not in the very being a Rock and a foundation; and it was of the Church of *Ephesus*, that *S. Paul* said in particular it was *columna & firmamentum veritatis*, that Church was, not excluding others,

Numb. 7.

Vid. Socrat.
l. 1. c. 19. 20.
Sozom. l. 2.
c. 14. Niceph.
l. 14. c. 10.
Numb. 8.

for they alſo were as much as ſhe ; for ſo we keep cloſe and be united to the corner ſtone, although ſome be maſter builders, yet all may build, and we have known whole Nations converted by Lay-men and women, who have been builders ſo farre as to bring them to the corner ſtone.

6. But ſuppoſe all theſe things concern S. *Peter* in all the capacities can be with any colour pretended, yet what have the Biſhops of *Rome* to doe with this? For how will it appear that theſe promiſes and Commiſſions did relate to him as a particular Biſhop, and not as a publike Apoſtle? Since this later is ſo much the more likely, becauſe the great pretence of all ſeemes in reaſon more proportionable to the founding of a Church, then its continuance : And yet if they did relate to him as a particular Biſhop (which yet is a further degree of improbability, removed further from certainty) yet why ſhall S. *Clement* or *Linus* rather ſucceed in this great office of headſhip then S. *John* or any of the Apoſtles that ſurvived *Peter* : It is no way likely a private perſon ſhould ſkip over the head of an Apoſtle ; or why ſhall his Succeſſors at *Rome* more enjoy the benefit of it then his Succeſſors at *Antioch*, ſince that he was at *Antioch* and preached there, we have a Divine Authority, but that he did ſo at *Rome* at moſt we have but a humane; and if it be replied that becauſe he dyed at *Rome*, it was Argument enough that there his Succeſſors were to inherit his privilege, this beſides that at moſt it is but one little degree of probability, and ſo not of ſtrength ſufficient to ſupport an Article of faith ; it makes that the great Divine Right of *Rome*, and the Apoſtolicall preſidency was ſo contingent and fallible as to depend upon the decree of *Nero*; and if he had ſent him to *Antioch* there to have ſuffered Martyrdom, the Biſhops of that Town had been heads of the Catholike Church. And this thing preſſes the harder, becauſe it is held by no meane perſons in the Church of *Rome*, that the Biſhoprick of *Rome* and the Papacy are things ſeparable : And the Pope may quit that Sea and ſit in another, which to my underſtanding is an Argument, that he that ſucceeded *Peter* at *Antioch*, is as much ſupream by Divine Right as he that ſits at *Rome*; both alike, that is, neither by Divine Ordinance ; For if the Roman Biſhops by Chriſt's

Vid. Camera-
renſ. Qu. v.
ſect.

Chriſt's intention were to be Head of the Church, then by the ſame intention, the Succeſſion muſt be continued in that Sea, and then let the Pope goe whether he will, the Biſhop of *Rome* muſt be the Head, which they themſelves deny, and the Pope himſelfe did not believe, when in a ſchilme he ſate at *Avignon*; and that it was to be continued in the Sea of *Rome*, it is but offered to us upon conjecture, upon an act of providence, as they fancy it, ſo ordering it by viſion, and this proved by an Author which themſelves call fabulous and Apocryphall, under the name of *Linus*, in *Biblioth. PP. de paſſione Petri & Pauli*: A goodly building which relies upon an event that was accidentall, whoſe purpoſe was but inſinuated, the meaning of it but conjectur'd at, and this conjecture ſo uncertain, that it was an imperfect aime at the purpoſe of an event, which whether it was true or no, was ſo uncertain, that it is ten to one there was no ſuch matter. And yet again, another degree of uncertainty is, to whom the Biſhops of *Rome* doe ſucceed: For *S. Paul* was as much Biſhop of *Rome*, as *S. Peter* was; there he preſided, there he preach'd, and he it was that was the Doctour of the Uncircumciſion and of the Gentiles, *S. Peter* of the Circumciſion, and of the Jewes only; and therefore the converted Jewes at *Rome*, might with better reaſon claim the privilege of *S. Peter*, then the Romans and the Churches in her Communion, who doe not derive from Jewiſh Parents.

7. If the words were never ſo appropriate to *Peter*, or alſo communicated to his Succeſſors, yet of what value will the conſequent be? what prerogative is entail'd upon the Chaire of *Rome*? For that *S. Peter* was the Miniſteriall Head of the Church, is the moſt that is deſir'd to be prov'd by thoſe and all other words brought for the ſame purpoſes, and intereſts of that Sea: Now let the Miniſteriall Head have what Dignity can be imagined, let him be the firſt (and in all Communities that are regular, and orderly there muſt be ſomething that is firſt, upon certain occaſions where an equall power cannot be exerciſed, and made pompous or ceremoniall:) But will this Miniſteriall Headſhip inferre an infallibility? will it inferre more then the Headſhip of the Jewiſh Synagogue, where clearly the High Prieſt was ſupreme in many ſenſes, yet in no ſenſe infallible?

infallible? will it inferre more to us, then it did amongst the Apostles? amongst whom if for orders sake, *S. Peter* was the first, yet he had no compulsory power over the Apostles; there was no such thing spoke of, nor any such thing put in practise. And that the other Apostles were by a personall priviledge as infallible as himsele, is no reason to hinder the exercise of jurisdiction or any compulsory power over them; for though in Faith they were infallible, yet in manners and matter of fact as likely to erre as *S. Peter* himsele was, and certainly there might have something hapned in the whole Colledge, that might have been a Record of his Authority, by transmitting an example of the exercise of some Judicall power over some one of them: If he had but withstood any of them to their faces, as *S. Paul* did him, it had been more then yet is said in his behalse. Will the Ministeriall Headship inferre any more then when the Church in a Community or a publike capacity, should doe any Act of Ministry Ecclesiasticall, he shall be first in Order? Suppose this to be a dignity to preside in Councils, which yet was not alwayes granted him; Suppose it to be a power of taking cognisance of the Major Causes of Bishops when Councils cannot be called; Suppose it a double voyce or the last decisive, or the negative in the causes exterior; Suppose it to be what you will of dignity or externall regiment, which when all Churches were united in Communion, and neither the interest of States, nor the engagement of opinions had made disunion, might better have been acted then now it can; yet this will fall infinitely short of a power to determine Controversies infallibly, and to prescribe to all mens faith and consciences. A Ministeriall Headship or the prime Minister cannot in any capacity become the foundation of the Church to any such purpose. And therefore men are causlessly amused with such premises, and are afraid of such Conclusions which will never follow from the admission of any sense of these words that can with any probability be pretended.

Numb. 10.

8. I consider that these Arguments from Scripture, are too weak to support such an Authority which pretends to give Oracles, and to answer infallibly in Questions of Faith, because there is greater reason to believe the Popes of *Rome* have erred,

erred, and greater certainty of demonstration, then these places can be that they are infallible, as will appear by the instances and perpetuall experiment of their being deceived, of which there is no Question, but of the sense of these places there is : And indeed if I had as clear Scripture for their infallibility, as I have against their halie Communion, against their Service in an unknown tongue, worshipping of Images, and divers other Articles, I would make no scruple of believing, but limit and conform my understanding to all their Dictates, and believe it reasonable all Propheesying should be restrain'd : But till then, I have leave to discourse, and to use my reason ; And to my reason, it seemes not likely that neither Christ nor any of his Apostles, S. Peter himselfe, nor S. Paul writing to the Church of Rome, should speak the least word or tittle of the infallibility of their Bishops, for it was certainly as convenient to tell us of a remedy, as to foretell that certainly there must needs be heresies, and need of a remedy. And it had been a certain determination of the Question, if when so rare an opportunity was ministred in the Question about Circumcision that they should have sent to Peter, who for his infallibility in ordinary, and his power of Headship would not only with reason enough as being infallibly assisted, but also for his Authority have best determin'd the Question, if at least the first Christians had known so profitable and so excellent a secret ; and although we have but little Record, that the first Councell at Jerusalem did much observe the solemnities of Law, and the forms of Conciliary proceedings, and the Ceremonials ; yet so much of it as is recorded, is against them, S. James and not S. Peter gave the finall sentence, and although S. Peter determin'd the Question *pro libertate*, yet S. James made the Decree, and the Assumentum too, and gave sentence they should abstaine from some things there mentioned, which by way of temper he judg'd most expedient : And so it passed. And S. Peter shewed no sign of a Superiour Authority, nothing of Superiour jurisdiction, *Ὅς ὁ ἀρχιεπίσκοπος καὶ οἱ ἐπίσκοποι καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι, ἡμεῖς ἀποστόλοι καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ ἐκρίναμεν*.

S. Chrysost.
hom. 3. in. act.
Apost.

So that if this Question be to be determin'd by Scripture, it must either be ended by plaine places or by obscure ; plaine
S places

Numb. 11.

places there are none, and theſe that are with greateſt fancy pretended, are expounded by Antiquity to contrary purpoſes. But if obſcure places be all the *audientia*, by what meanes ſhall we infallibly find the ſenſe of them? The Popes interpretation though in all other caſes it might be pretended, in this cannot; for it is the thing in Queſtion, and therefore cannot determine for it ſelfe; either therefore we have alſo another infallible guide beſides the Pope, and ſo we have two Foundations and two Heads (for this as well as the other upon the ſame reaſon) or elſe (which is indeed the truth) there is no infallible way to be infallibly aſſured that the Pope is infallible. Now it being againſt the common condition of men, above the pretences of all other Governours Eccleſiaſtical, againſt the Analogy of Scripture, and the deportment of the other Apoſtles, againſt the Oeconomy of the Church, and *S. Peters* own entertainment, the preſumption lies againſt him, and theſe places, are to be left to their prime intentions and not put upon the rack, to force them to confeſſe what they never thought.

Numb. 12.

But now for Antiquity, if that be depoſed in this Queſtion, there are ſo many circumſtances to be conſidered to reconcile their words and their actions, that the proceſſe is more troubleſome, then the Argument can be concluding, or the matter conſiderable: But I ſhall a little conſider it, ſo farre at leaſt as to ſhew either Antiquity ſaid no ſuch thing as is pretended, or if they did, it is but little conſiderable, becauſe they did not believe themſelves; their praſtiſe was the greateſt evidence in the world againſt the pretence of their words. But I am much eaſed of a long diſquiſition in this particular (for I love not to prove a Queſtion by Arguments whoſe Authority is in it ſelfe as fallible, and by circumſtances made as uncertain as the Queſtion) by the ſaying of *Aeneas Sylvius*, that before the *Nicene* Councell every man liv'd to himſelfe, and ſmall reſpect was had to the Church of *Rome*, which praſtiſe could not well conſiſt with the Doctrin of their Biſhops infallibility, and by conſequence ſupreme judgement and laſt reſolution in matters of Faith; but eſpecially by the inſinuation and conſequent acknowledgement of *Bellarmino*, that for 1000 years together the Fathers knew not of the Doctrin of the Popes infallibility, for

for *Nilus*, *Gerson*, *Alemain*, the Divines of *Paris*, *Alphonſus de Caſtro*, and Pope *Adrian VI.* perſons who liv'd 1400 after Chriſt, affirm, that infallibility is not ſeated in the Popes perſon, that he may erre and ſometimes actually hath, which is a clear demonstration that the Church knew no ſuch Doctrin as this; there had been no Decree nor Tradition, nor generall opinion of the Fathers, or of any age before them; and therefore this opinion which *Bellarmino* would ſaine blaſt if he could, yet in his Conclusion he ſayes it is not *proprie heretica*. A device, and an expreſſion of his own without ſenſe or precedent. But if the Fathers had ſpoken of it and believed it, why may not a diſagreeing perſon as well reject their Authority when it is in behalf of *Rome*, as they of *Rome* without ſcruple caſt them off when they ſpeak againſt it? For as *Bellarmino* being preſſed with the Authority of *Nilus* Biſhop of *Theſſalonica* and other Fathers, he ſayes that the Pope acknowledges no Fathers but they are all his children, and therefore they cannot depoſe againſt him; and if that be true, why ſhall we take their Teſtimonies for him? for if Sonnes depoſe in their Fathers behalfe, it is twenty to one, but the adverſe party will be caſt, and therefore at the beſt it is but *ſuſpectum Teſtimonium*. But indeed this diſcourſe ſignifies nothing, but a perpetuall uncertainty in ſuch topicks, and that where a violent prejudice, or a concerning intereſt is engag'd, men by not regarding what any man ſayes, proclaim to all the world that nothing is certain, but Divine Authority.

But I will not take advantage of what *Bellarmino* ſayes, nor what *Stapleton*, or any one of them all ſay, for that will be but to preſſe upon perſonall perſwaſions, or to urge a generall Queſtion with a particular deſaillance, and the Queſtion is never the nearer to an end; for if *Bellarmino* ſayes any thing that is not to another mans purpoſe or perſwaſion, that man will be tryed by his own Argument, not by anothers: And ſo would every man doe that loves his liberty, as all wiſe men doe, and therefore retain it by open violence, or private evaſions: But to return.

An Authority from *Irenaeus* in this Queſtion, and on behalf of the Popes infallibility, or the Authority of the Sea of *Rome*,

or of the neceſſity of communicating with them is very fallible; for beſides that there are almoſt a dozen answers to the words of the Allegation, as is to be ſeen in thoſe that trouble themſelves in this Queſtion with the Allegation, and answering ſuch Authorities, yet if they ſhould make for the affirmative of this Queſtion, it is *proteſtatio contra factum*. For *Irenæus* had no ſuch great opinion of Pope *Victors* infallibility, that he believed things in the ſame degree of neceſſity that the Pope did, for therefore he chides him for Excommunicating the *Aſian* Biſhops *ad pios* all at a blow in the Queſtion concerning Eaſter day; and in a Queſtion of Faith he expreſſly diſagreed from the doctrine of *Rome*; for *Irenæus* was of the Millenary opinion, and believed it to be a Tradition Apoſtolicall; now if the Church of *Rome* was of that opinion, then why is ſhe not now? where is the ſucceſſion of her doctrine? But if ſhe was not of that opinion then, and *Irenæus* was, where was his belief of that Churches infallibility? The ſame I urge concerning *S. Cyprian* who was the head of a Sect in oppoſition to the Church of *Rome*, in the Queſtion of rebaptization, and he and the abettors, *Firmilian* and the other Biſhops of *Cappadocia*, and the voiſinage ſpoke harſh words of *Stephen*, and ſuch as become them not to ſpeak to an infallible Doctor, and the ſupreme Head of the Church. I will urge none of them to the diſadvantage of that Sea, but only note the Satyrs of *Firmilian* againſt him; becauſe it is of good uſe, to ſhew that it is poſſible for them in their ill carriage to blaſt the reputation and efficacy of a great Authority: For he ſayes that that Church did pretend the Authority of the Apoſtles, *cum in multis ſacramentis divina rei, à principio diſcrepet, & ab Eccleſia Hieroſolymitana, & deſamet Petrum & Paulum tanquam anchores*. And a little after juſtè *deſignor* (ſayes he) *apertum & manifeſtum ſtultitiam Stephani, per quam veritas Chriſtiane petra aboletur*, which words ſay plainly that for all the goodly pretence of Apoſtolicall Authority, the Church of *Rome* did then in many things of Religion diſagree from Divine Inſtitution (and from the Church of *Jeruſalem*, which they had as great eſteeme of for Religion ſake; as of *Rome* for its principality) and that ſtill in pretending to *S. Peter* and *S. Paul* they diſhonoured thoſe bleſſed Apoſtles, and

Epist. Firmiliani contr. Steph. ad Cyprian. Vid. etiam Ep. Cypriani ad Pompeianum.

deſtroyed the honour of their pretence by their untoward pre-
varication; which words I confeſſe paſſe my ſkill to reconcile
them to an opinion of inſallibility; and although they were
ſpoken by an angry perſon, yet they declare that in *Africa* they
were not then perſwaded, as now they were at *Rome*: *Nam*
nec Petrus quem primum Dominus elegit vendicavit ſibi aliquid
inſolenter aut arroganter aſſumpſit, ut diceret ſe primum tenere:
That was their belief then, and how the contrary hath grown
up to that heighth where now it is all the world is witneſſe:
And now I ſhall not need to note concerning *S. Hierome*, that
he gave a complement to *Damaſus*, that he would not have
given to *Liberius*, *Qui ſecum non colligit ſpargit*. For it might
be true enough of *Damaſus* who was a good Biſhop and a right
believer; but if *Liberius's* name had been put inſtead of *Da-*
maſus, the caſe had been altered with the name; for *S. Hieroms*
did believe and write it ſo, that *Liberius* had ſubſcrib'd to *Ar-*
rianiſm. And if either he or any of the reſt had believ'd the
Pope could not be a Heretick nor his Faith fail, but be ſo
good and of ſo competent Authority as to be a Rule to Chriſten-
dome; Why did they not appeale to the Pope in the *Arrian*
Controverſy? why was the Biſhop of *Rome* made a Party and a
concurrent as other good Biſhops were, and not a Judge and
an Arbitrator in the Queſtion? Why did the Fathers preſcribe
ſo many Rules and cautions and proviſoes for the diſcovery of
heſey? Why were the Emperours at ſo much charge, and
the Church at ſo much trouble as to call and convene in
Councils reſpectively, to diſpute ſo frequently, to write ſo ſe-
dulouſly, to obſerve all advantages againſt their Adverſaries,
and for the truth, and never offered to call for the Pope
to determine the Queſtion in his Chaire? Certainly no
way could have been ſo expedite, none ſo concludng and pe-
remptory, none could have convinc'd ſo certainly, none could
have triumph'd ſo openly over all diſcrepant as this, if they had
known of any ſuch thing as his being inſallible, or that he had
been appointed by Chriſt to be the Judge of Controverſies.
And therefore I will not trouble this diſcourſe to excuſe any
more words either pretended or really ſaid to this purpoſe of
the Pope, for they would but make books ſwell and the Queſtion

Cyprian Epiſt.
ad Quintum
fratrem.

D: Script.
Eccleſ. in For-
tunatiano.

* Vbi illa Auguſtini & reliquorum prudentia? quis jam ſciat craſſiſſimæ ignorantie illam vocem in tot & tantis Patribus? *Alan. Cop. dialog. p. 76, 77. Vide etiam Bonific. 11. Epiſt. ad Euſtathium Alexandrinum. Lindanum Patropſ. l. 4. c. 83. in fine. Sa'merton Tom. 1. Traſl. 68. § ad Canonem Sander. de uſu ſubili Monarchia, l. 7. n. 411. Burton. Tom. 10. A. D. 878.*

endleſſe, I ſhall only to this purpoſe obſerve that the Old Writers were ſo farre from believing the infallibility of the Roman Church or Biſhop, that many Biſhops and many Churches did actually live and continue out of the Roman Communion; particularly * *S. Auſtin*, who with 217 Biſhops and their Succeſſors for 100 years together ſtood ſeparate from that Church, if we may believe their own Records: So did *Ignatius* of *Conſtantinople*, *S. Chryſoſtome*, *S. Cyprian*, *Firmitian*, thoſe Biſhops of *Asia* that ſeparated in the Queſtion of Eaſter, and thoſe of *Africa* in the Queſtion of rebaptization: But beſides this, moſt of them had opinions which the Church of *Rome* diſavowes now, and therefore did ſo then, or elſe ſhe hath innovated in her Doctrin, which though it be moſt true and notorious, I am ſure ſhe will never confeſſe. But no excuſe can be made for *S. Auſtin*'s diſagreeing, and conteſting in the Queſtion of appeales to *Rome*, the neceſſity of Communicating Infants, the abſolute damnation of Infants to the pains of Hell, if they die before Baptiſm, and divers other particulars. It was a famous act of the Biſhops of *Liguria* and *Iſtria* who ſeeing the Pope of *Rome* conſenting to the fifth Synod in diſparagement of the famous Councell of *Chalcedon*, which for their own intereſts they did not like of, they renounced ſubjection to his Patriarchate, and erected a Patriarch at *Aquileia* who was afterwards tranſlated to *Venice*, where his name remains to this day. It is alſo notorious that moſt of the Fathers were of opinion that the ſoules of the faithfull did not enjoy the beatifick Viſion before Doomſday; whether *Rome* was then of that opinion or no, I know not, I am ſure now they are not; witneſſe the Councils of *Florence* and *Trent*; but of this I ſhall give a more full account afterwards. But if to all this which is already noted, we adde that great variety of opinions amongſt the Fathers and Councils in aſſignation of the Canon, they not conſulting with the Biſhop of *Rome*, nor any of them thinking themſelves bound to follow his Rule in enumeration of the books of Scripture, I think no more need to be ſaid as to this particular.

Numb. 15.

8. But now if after all this, there be ſome Popes which were notorious Hereticks, and Preachers of falſe Doctrin, ſome that made

made impious Decrees both in faith and manners; ſome that have determin'd Questions with egregious ignorance and ſtupidity, ſome with apparent Sophiſtry, and many to ſerve their own ends moſt openly, I ſuppoſe then the infallibility will diſband, and we may doe to him as to other good Biſhops, believe him when there is cauſe; but if there be none, then to uſe our Conſciences, *Non enim ſalvat Chriſtianum quod Pontifex conſtantiſſe affirmat præceptum ſuum eſſe juſtum, ſed oportet illud examinari, & ſe juxta regulam ſuperius datum dirigere*: I would not inſtance and repeat the errours of dead Biſhops, if the extreme boldneſſe of the pretence did not make it neceſſary: But if we may believe *Tertullian*, Pope *Zepherinus* approv'd the Prophecies of *Montanus*, and upon that approbation granted peace to the Churches of *Aſia* and *Phrygia*, till *Praxeas* perſwaded him to revoke his act: But let this reſt upon the credit of *Tertullian*, whether *Zepherinus* were a *Montaniſt* or no; ſome ſuch thing there was for certain. Pope *Vigilius* denyed two natures in Chriſt, and in his Epistle to *Theodora* the Empreſſe anathematiz'd all them that ſaid he had two natures in one perſon; *S. Gregory* himſelfe permitted Prielts to give confirmation, which is all one as if he ſhould permit Deacons to conſecrate, they being by Divine Ordinance annex to the higher orders; and upon this very ground *Adrianus* affirms that the Pope may erre in *deſiniendis dogmatibus fidei*. And that we may not feare we ſhall want inſtances, we may to ſecure it take their own confeſſion, *Nam multa ſunt decretales hæreticæ ſayes Occham* as he is cited by *Almain*, & firmiter hoc credo (ſayes he for his own particular) *ſed non licet dogmatizare opoſitum quoniam ſunt determinata*. So that we may as well ſee that it is certain that Popes may be Hereticks, as that it is dangerous to ſay ſo; and therefore there are ſo few that teach it: All the Patriarchs and the Biſhop of *Rome* himſelfe ſubſcrib'd to *Arrianism* (as *Baronius* confeſſes;) and * *Gratian* affirms that Pope *Anaſtaſius* the Second was ſtrucken of God for communicating with the Heretick *Photinus*. I know it will be made light of that *Gregory* the Seventh ſaith, the very exorcists of the Roman Church are Superiour to Princes. But what ſhall we think of that decretall of *Gregory* the Third, who wrote

Tract. de in-
cerdict. Con:
poſ. à Theol.
Venet. prop.
13.

Lib. adver.
Praxeam.

Vid. Liberal.
in breviario,
cap. 22.
Durand. 4.
diſt. 7. q. 1.

Quæ. de con-
ſirm. arc. ult.

3. diſt. 24.
q. unica.

A. D. 357. n. 44.
* Diſt. 19. c. 59.
L. 4. Ep. 2.

Vid. Coſtan-
Sum. Concil.
ſol. 18. Edit.
Antwerp.

Cap per vene-
rabilem. qui
ſili ſint legiti-
mi.

Diſt. 15. pud
Gratian.

De Sacerd.
bapt.

to Boniface his Legate in Germany, *quod illi quorum uxores infirmitate aliquâ morbide debitum reddere noluerunt, aliis poterant nubere* was this a Doctrine fit for the Head of the Church, an infallible Doctör? it was plainly, if any thing ever was *doctrina Dæmoniorum*, and is noted for ſuch by *Gratian*, *cauſ. 32. q. 7. can. quod propoſuiſti*. Where the głoſſe alſo intimates that the ſame priviledge was granted to the Engliſhmen by *Gregory*, *quia novi erant in fide*. And ſometimes we had little reaſon to expect much better; for, not to inſtance in that learned diſcourſe in the * Canon Law *de majoritate & obedientiâ*, where the Popes Supremacy over Kings is proved from the firſt chapter of *Genefis*, and the Pope is the Sunne, and the Emperour is the Moone, for that was the fancy of one Pope perhaps; though made authentick and doctſinall by him; it was (if it be poſſible) more ridiculous, that Pope *Innocent* the Third urges that the Moſaical Law was ſtill to be obſerved, and that upon this Argument, *Sanè*, ſaith he, *cum Deuteronomium ſecunda lex interpretetur ex vi vocabuli comprobatur ut quod ibi decernitur in Teſtamento novo debeat obſervari*: Worſe yet; for when there was a corruption crept into the Decree called *Sancta Romana*, where inſtead of theſe words *Sedulius opus heroicis verſibus deſcriptum*, all the old Copies till of late read *hereticis verſibus deſcriptum*; this very miſtake made many wiſe men, (as *Pierius* ſayes) yea Pope *Adrian* the Sixth, no worſe man, believe that all Poetry was hereticall, becauſe (forſooth) Pope *Gelaſius* whoſe Decree that was, although he believ'd *Sedulius* to be a good Catholike, yet as they thought, he concluded his Verſes to be hereticall: But theſe were ignorances; it hath been worſe amongſt ſome others, whoſe errorrs have been more malicious. Pope *Honorius* was condemned by the ſixth Generall Synod, and his Epiſtles burnt, and in the ſeventh aſſion of the eighth Synod, the Acts of the Romane Councell under *Adrian* the Second are recited, in which it is ſaid that *Honorius* was juſtly Anathematiz'd, becauſe he was convict of hereſy. *Bellarmino* ſayes it is probable that Pope *Adrian* and the Roman Councell were deceived with falſe Copies of the ſixth Synod, and that *Honorius* was no Here-tick. To this I ſay, that although the Roman Synod and the

eighth generall Synod, and Pope *Adrian*, altogether are better witneſſes for the thing then *Bellarmines* conjecture is againſt it, yet if we allow his conjecture wee ſhall loſe nothing in the whole, for either the Pope is no infallible Doctor, but may be a Heretick as *Honorius* was, or elſe a Councell is to us no infallible determiner; I ſay, as to us, for if *Adrian* and the whole *Roman* Councell & the eighth Generall were all cozen'd with falſe Copies of the ſixth Synod, which was ſo little a while before them, and whoſe acts were tranſacted & kept in the Theatre and Records of the Catholike Church; he is a bold man that will be confident that he hath true Copies now. So that let which they pleaſe ſtand or fall, let the Pope be a Heretick or the Councels be deceived and palpably abuſed, (for the other, we will diſpute it upon other inſtances and arguments when we ſhall know which part they will chooſe) in the meane time we ſhall get in the generall what we looſe in the particular. This only, this device of ſaying the Copies of the Councels were falſe, was the ſtratagem of *Albertus Pigbius* 900 years after the thing was done, of which invention *Pigbius* was preſently admoniſhed, blamed, and wiſhed to recant. Pope *Nicholas* explicated the Myſtery of the Sacrament with ſo much ignorance and zeale that in condemning *Berengarius* he taught a worſe impiety. But what need I any more inſtances; it is a confeſſed caſe by *Baronius*, by *Biel*, by *Stella*, *Almain*, *Occham*, and *Cannus*, and generally by the beſt Scholars in the Church of *Rome*, that a Pope may be a Heretick, and that ſome of them actually were ſo, and no leſſe then three generall Councels did beleive the ſame thing: viz. ſixth, leaventh, and eighth, as *Bellarmino* is pleaſed to acknowledge in his fourth book *de Pontifice Romano*. c. 11. *reſp. ad Arg. 4.* And the Canon *ſi Papadiſt*. 40. affirms it in expreſſe termes, that a Pope is judicable and puniſhable in that caſe. But there is no wound but ſome Emperick or other will pretend to cure it, and there is a cure for this too. For though it be true that if a Pope were a Heretick, the Church might depoſe him, yet no Pope can be a Heretick, not but that the man may, but the Pope cannot, for he is *ipſo facto* no Pope, for he is no Chriſtian; ſo *Bellarmino*: and ſo when you think you have him faſt, he is gone, and nothing of the Pope left; but who

Vid. diſtrib. de aſt. 6. & 7^a. Synod. præſatio e ad Lectorem & Dominicum Barnes 22^a. q. 1. a. 10. dub. 2.

* Picus Mirand. in expoſit. theoreſm. 4.

L. 2. c. 30. ubi ſupra. §. 5^o

ſees

* Vide Alphonſi à Caſtr. l. b. i. adv. hæref. c. 4. hoc lemma ridet. rem affabiè.

Vid. etiam Innocentium Sermon. 2. de conſecrat. Pontific. ad. 7. 8^o. Synodi. & Concil. 5. ſub Symmachio. vide Collat. 8. canon. 1. ubi PP. judicialem ſententiam Pontificis in cauſa Capitulum Capitulorum damnarunt expreſſè. Extra. comm. Extrav. grave. Tit. X.

De Angelo cuſtod. fol. 59. de conſecrat. diſt. 3. canon. pronuntiand. gloſſ. verb. Nativit.

ſees not the extreame folly of this evaſion? For beſides that out of feare and caution he grants more then he needs, more then was ſought for in the Queſtion, the Pope hath no more priviledge then the Abbot of *Cluny*, for he cannot be a Heretick, nor be depoſed by a Courtcell, for if he be *manifeſtly* a Heretick he is *ipſo facto* no Abbot, for he is no Chriſtian; and if the Pope be a Heretick *privately and occultly*, for that he may be accuſed and judged ſayd the Gloſſe upon the Canon *ſi Papa diſt. 40.* And the Abbot of *Cluny* and one of his meanest Monks can be no more, therefore the caſe is all one. But this is fitter to make ſport with then to interrupt a ſerious diſcourſe. And therefore although the Canon *Sancta Romana* approves all the Decretals of Popes, yet that very Decretall hath not decreed it firm enough, but that they are ſo warily receiv'd by them, that when they liſt they are pleaſed to diſſent from them; And it is evident in the Extravagant of *Sixtus IV. Com. De reliquiis*; who appointed a Feaſt of the immaculate conception, a ſpeciall Office for the day, and Indulgences enough to the obſervers of it: And yet the *Dominicans* were ſo farre from believing the Pope to be inſallible and his Decree authentick, that they declaim'd againſt it in their Pulpits ſo furiously and ſo long till they were prohibited under paine of Excommunication, to ſay the Virgin *Mary* was conceived in Originall ſin; Now what ſolemnity can be more required for the Pope to make a Cathedrall determination of an Article? The Article was ſo concluded, that a Feaſt was inſtituted for its celebration, and pain of Excommunication threatned to them which ſhould preach the contrary; Nothing more ſolemnne, nothing more confident and ſevere: And yet after all this, to ſhew that whatſoever thoſe people would have uſe to believe, they'll believe what they liſt themſelves; This thing was not determined *de fide* ſaith *Victorellus*; Nay, the Author of the Gloſſe of the Canon Law hath theſe expreſſe words, *De feſto Conceptionis nihil dicitur quia celebrandum non eſt, ſicut in multis regionibus ſit, & maxime in Angliâ, & hac eſt ratio, quia in peccatis concepta ſuis ſicut & ceteri Sancti.* And the Commiſſaries, of *Sixtus V.* and *Gregory XIII.* did not expunge theſe words, but leſt them upon Record, not only againſt a received and more approved opinion of the Jeſuites and *Franciſcans*, but alſo in

in plain defiance of a Decree made by their viſible head of the Church, who (if ever any thing was decreed by a Pope, with an intent to oblige all Chriſtendome) decreed * this to that purpoſe.

So that without taking particular notice of it, that egregious ſophiſtry and flattery of the late Writers of the Roman Church is in this inſtance, beſides divers others before mentioned, clearly made invalid. For here the Biſhop of *Rome* not as a private Doctor, but as Pope, not by declaring his own opinion, but with an intent to oblige the Church, gave ſentence in a Queſtion which the *Dominicans* will ſtill account *pro non determinatâ*. And every decretall recorded in the Canon Law if it be falſe in the matter, is juſt ſuch another inſtance: And *Alphonſus à Caſtro* ſayes it to the ſame purpoſe, in the inſtance of *Celeſtine* diſſolving Marriages for hereſy, *Neg. Celeſtini error talis fuit qui ſoli negligentie imputari debent, ita ut illum erraſſe dicamus velut privatam perſonam & non ut Papam, quoniam huiusmodi Celeſtini deſinito habetur in antiquis decretalibus in cap. Laudabilem, titulo de converſione infidelium; quem ego iſſe vidi & legi, lib. 1. adv. hereſ. cap. 4.* And therefore 'tis a moſt intolerable folly to pretend that the Pope cannot erre in his Chaire, though he may erre in his Cloiet, and may maintaine a falſe opinion even to his death: For beſides that, it is ſottiſh to think that either he would not have the world of his own opinion (as all men naturally would) or that if he were ſet in his Chaire, he would determine contrary to himſelfe in his ſtudy (and therefore to repreſent it as poſſible, they are ſaine to flie to a Miracle for which they have no colour, neither inſtructions, nor inſinuation, nor warrant, nor promiſe; beſides that, it were impious and unreaſonable to depoſe him for hereſy, who may ſo eaſily, even by ſetting himſelfe in his Chaire and reviewing his Theorems, be cured :) it is alſo againſt a very great experience: For beſides the former Allegations it is moſt notorious, that Pope *Alexander III* in a Councell at *Rome* of 300 Archbiſhops and Biſhops *A. D. 1179.* condemn'd *Peter Lombard* of hereſy in a matter of great concernment, no leſſe then ſomething about the incarnation; from which ſentence he was, after 36 years abiding it, abſolv'd by Pope *Innocent III*,

* Hæc in perpetuum valuerunt conſtitutione ſtatimur, &c. De reliquiis, &c. Extrav. Com. Sixt. 4. cap. 1. Numb. 16.

L.2. de. Con-
cil. cap. 5.

De Pontif.
Rom. c. 14.
§ respondeo.
In 3. sent. d. 24.
q. in concl. 6.
dist. 6. in fine.
• Proverbiali-
ter olim dictū
erat, de De-
cretalibus, Ma-
lè cum rebus
humanis a sum-
esse, ex quo de-
cretis alæ ac-
cesserunt. scil.
cum Decretales
post decretum
Gratiani sub
nomine Gre-
gorii non ede-
bantur.

De Authorit.
Eccles. cap. 10.
in fine.

† L. 1. c. 2. 4. ad-
vers. hæres. c-
dit. Paris 1534.
In seqq. non
expurgantur
istâ verba, at
idem sensus
manet.

without repentance or dereliction of the opinion : Now if this sentence was not a Cathedrall Diſtate, as solemn and great as could be expected, or as is said to be necessary to oblige all Christendome, let the great Hyperaspists of the Roman Church be Judges, who tell us that a particular Councell with the Popes confirmation is made Oecumenicall by adoption, and is infallible and obliges all Christendome; so *Bellarmino*: And therefore he says, that it is *temerarium, erroneum, & proximum hæresis*, to deny it, but whether it be or not it is all one, as to my purpose: For it is certain, that in a particular Councell confirm'd by the Pope, if ever; then and there the Pope sate himself in his Chaire, and it is as certain that he sate besides the cushion and determined ridiculously and falsely in this case: But this is a device for which there is no Scripture, no Tradition, no one dogmaticall resolute saying of any Father, Greek or Latine, for above 1000 years after Christ: And themselves when they list can acknowledge as much. And therefore *Bellarmino's* saying, I perceive is believ'd by them to be true: That there are many things in the * Decretall Epistles, which make not Articles to be *de fide*. And therefore, *Non est necessarium credendum determinatis per summum Pontificem*, says *Almain*: And this serves their turns in every thing they doe not like, and therefore I am resolved it shall serve my turn also for some thing, and that is, that the matter of the Pope's infallibility is so ridiculous and improbable, that they doe not believe it themselves: Some of them clearly praîsed the contrary, and although Pope *Leo X* hath determined the Pope to be above a Councell, yet the *Sorbon* to this day scorn it at the very heart. And I might urge upon them that scorn that *Almain* truly enough by way of Argument alledges. It is a wonder that they who affirm the Pope cannot erre in judgement, doe not also affirm that he cannot sinne: they are like enough to say so says he, if the vicious lives of the Popes did not make a daily confutation of such flattery: Now for my own particular, I am as confident and think it as certain, that Popes are actually deceived in matters of Christian Doctrine, as that they doe prevaricate the lawes of Christian piety: And therefore † *Alphonsus à Castro* calls them *impudenter Papa assentatores*, that ascribe to him infallibili-

ty in judgement or interpretation of Scripture.

But if themſelves did believe it heartily, what excuſe is there *Numb. 11.* in the world, for the ſtrange uncharitableneſſe or ſupine negligence of the Popes, that they doe not ſet themſelves in their Chaire and write infallible Commentaries, and determine all Controverſies without errour, and blaſt all heresies with the word of their mouth, declare what is and what is not *de fide*, that his Diſciples and Confidants may agree upon it; reconcile the *Franciſcans* and *Dominicans*, and expound all Myſteries? for it cannot be imagined but he that was endued with ſo ſupreme power in order to ſo great ends, was alſo fitted with proportionable, that is, extraordinary perſonall abilities, ſucceeding and deriv'd upon the perſons of all the Popes. And then the Doctours of his Church, need not trouble themſelves with ſtudy, nor writing explications of Scripture, but might wholly attend to practiſall devotion, and leave all their Scholaſticall wranglings, the diſtinguiſhing opinions of their Orders, and they might have a fine Church, ſomething like Fairy land, or *Lucians* Kingdome in the Moone: But if they ſay they cannot doe this when they liſt, but when they are mov'd to it by the Spirit, then we are never the nearer; for ſo may the Biſhop of *Angoleſme* write infallible Commentaries when the holy Ghoſt moves him to it, for I ſuppoſe his motions are not ineffectuall, but hee will ſufficiently aſſiſt us in performing of what he aſſually moves us to: But among ſo many hundred Decrees which the Popes of *Rome* have made or confirmed and atteſted (which is all one) I would faine know in how many of them did the holy Ghoſt aſſiſt them? If they know it, let them declare it, that it may be certain which of their Decretals are *de fide*; for as yet none of his own Church knowes: If they doe not know, then neither can we know it from them, and then we are as uncertaine as ever, and beſides, the holy Ghoſt may poſſibly move him, and he by his ignorance of it may neglect ſo profitable a motion, and then his promiſe of infallible aſſiſtance will be to very little purpoſe, becauſe it is with very much fallibility applicable to praſtiſe: And therefore it is abſolutely uſeleſſe to any man or any Church, becauſe, ſuppoſe it ſettled in *7heſſ*, that the Pope is infallible, yet whether he will doe his duty, and perform

perform those conditions of being assisted which are required of him, or whether he be a secret Simoniack (for if he be, he is *ipso facto*, no Pope) or whether he be a Bishop, or Priest, or a Christian, being all uncertain; every one of these depending upon the intention and power of the Baptizer or Ordainer, which also are fallible, because they depend upon the honesty and power of other men; we cannot be infallibly certain of any Pope that he is infallible, and therefore when our Questions are determin'd, we are never the nearer, but may hugge our selves in an imaginary truth, the certainty of finding truth out depending upon so many fallible and contingent circumstances. And therefore, the thing, if it were true, being so to no purpose, it is to be presum'd that God never gave a power so impertinently, and from whence no benefit can accrue to the Christian Church, for whose use and benefit, if at all, it must needs have been appointed.

Numb. 18. But I am too long in this impertinency: If I were bound to call any man Master upon earth, and to believe him upon his own affirmative and authority; I would of all men least follow him that pretends he is infallible and cannot prove it. For that he cannot prove it, makes me as uncertaine as ever, and that he pretends to infallibility makes him carelesse of using such meanes which will morally secure those wise persons, who knowing their own aptnesse to be deceiv'd, use what endeavours they can to secure themselves from error, and so become the better and more probable guides.

Numb. 19. Well! Thus farre we are come: Although we are secured in fundamentall points from involuntary error, by the plain, expresse, and dogmaticall places of Scripture, yet in other things we are not but may be invincibly mistaken, because of the obscurity and difficulty in the controverted parts of Scripture, by reason of the uncertainty of the meanes of its Interpretation, since Tradition is of an uncertain reputation, and sometimes evidently false, Councils are contradictory to each other, and therefore certainly are equally deceiv'd many of them, and therefore all may; and then the Popes of Rome are very likely to mislead us, but cannot ascertain us of truth in matter of Question; and in this world we believe in part, and prophecy in part,

part, and this imperfection ſhall never be done away till we be tranſlated to a more glorious ſtate; either we muſt throw our chances, and get truth by accident or predeſtination, or elſe we muſt lie ſafe in a mutuall toleration, and private liberty of perſuaſion, unleſſe ſome other Anchor can bee thought upon where wee may faſten our floating Veſſels, and ride ſafely.

SECT. VIII.

Of the disability of Fathers, or Writers Eccleſiaſtical, to determine our Queſtions, with certainty and Truth.

THere are ſome that think they can determine all Queſti-
ons in the world by two or three ſayings of the Fathers, or by the conſent of ſo many as they will pleaſe to call a concurrent Teſtimony: But this conſideration will ſoon be at an end; for if the Fathers, when they are witneſſes of Tradition doe not alwayes ſpeak truth, as it hapned in the caſe of *Papias* and his numerous Followers for almoſt three Ages together, then is their Teſtimony more improbable when they diſpute or write Commentaries. Numb. 1.

2. The Fathers of the firſt Ages ſpoke unitedly concerning divers Queſtions of ſecret Theology, and yet were afterwards contradicted by one perſonage of great reputation, whoſe credit had ſo much influence upon the world, as to make the contrary opinion become popular; why then may not we have the ſame liberty, when ſo plain an uncertainty is in their perſuaſions, and ſo great contrariety in their Doctrines? But this is evident in the caſe of abſolute predeſtination, which till *S. Auſtine's* time no man preached, but all taught the contrary, and yet the reputation of this one excellent man altered the ſcene. But if he might diſſent from ſo Generall a Doctrine, why may not we doe ſo too, it being pretended that he is ſo excellent a precedent to be followed, if we have the ſame reaſon? he had no more Authority nor diſpenſation to diſſent, then any Biſhop hath now. And therefore *S. Auſtin* hath dealt ingeniouſly, and Numb. 2.

Seſſ. ult.
 a Q. 6. ad
 Chriſtian.
 b Lib. 5.
 c Hom. 7. in
 Levit.
 d Hom. 39 in
 1 Cor.
 e Inc. 11. ad
 Heb.
 f In c. 6. ad
 Apoc.
 g In 16. c. Luc.
 h Lib. 4. adv.
 Mar.
 i L. 2. de. Cain.
 c. 2.
 k Ep. 111. ad
 Fortunaria-
 num.
 l In Pſal. 138.
 m De excq.
 defunctor.
 n L. 7. c. 21.
 o In c. 6. Apoc.
 p Sermon. 3. de
 om. ſanctis.
 Vid. enim,
 S. Aug. in
 Enchir. c. 103.
 & l. 12. de civit.
 Dei. c. 9. & in
 Pſ. 36. & in l. 1.
 retract. c. 14.
 Vid. inſuper
 teſtimonia quæ
 collegit Spala.
 l. 5. c. 8. n. 98.
 de repub. Eccl.
 & Sixt. Senenſ.
 l. 6. annot. 345.

q In oper. 50.
 dierum.

as he took this liberty to himſelf, ſo he denies it not to others,
 but indeed forces them to preſerve their own liberty : And
 therefore when S. Hierom had a great mind to follow the Fa-
 thers in a point that he fancyed, and the beſt ſecurity he had,
 was, *Patriaris me cum talibus errare*, S. Auſtin would not endure
 it, but answered his reaſon, and neglected the Authority. And
 therefore it had been moſt unreaſonable that we ſhould doe
 that now, though in his behalfe, which he towards greater per-
 ſonages (for ſo they were then) at that time judg'd to be un-
 reaſonable. It is a plaine reſeſſion from Antiquity, which was
 determin'd by the Councell of Florence, *piorum animas purga-
 tas, &c. mox in Calum recipi, & intueri clarè ipſum Deum tri-
 num & unumſicuti eſt* : As who pleaſe to try, may ſee it dogma-
 tically reſolved to the contrary by a Juſtin Martyr, b Irenæus,
 by c Origen, d S. Chryſoſtome, e Theodoret, f Arethas Caſarien-
 ſis, g Enthyminus, who may answer for the Greek Church, and
 it is plaine that it was the opinion of the Greek Church by
 that great difficulty the Romans had of bringing the Greeks to
 ſubſcribe to the Florentine Councell, where the Latines acted
 their maſter-piece of wit and ſtratagem, the greateſt that hath
 been till the famous and ſuperpolitick deſign of Trent. And
 for the Latine Church, h Tertullian, i S. Ambroſe, k S. Auſtin,
 l S. Hilary, m Prudentius, n Laſtantius, o Viſtorinus Martyr, and
 p S. Bernard are known to be of opinion that the ſoules of
 the Saints are in *abditis receptaculis, & exterioribus atriis*, where
 they expect the reſurrection of their bodies, and the glorifica-
 tion of their ſoules, and though they all believe them to be
 happy, yet they enjoy not the beatifick Viſion before the re-
 ſurrection : Now there being ſo full a conſent of Fathers (for
 many more may be added) and the Decree of Pope John XXII,
 beſides, who was ſo confident for his Decree that he commanded
 the Univerſity of Paris to ſwear that they would preach it and
 no other, and that none ſhould be promoted to degrees in
 Theology, that did not ſwear the like, (as q Occham, r Geſon,
 ſ Marſilius and t Adriannus report :) Since it is eſteemed lawfull
 to diſſent from all theſe, I hope no man will be ſo unjuſt to
 preſſe other men to conſent to an Authority which he him-

ſelfe
 ſcrui. de Paſchal. f In 4. ſent. q. 13. 23. t In 4. de ſacram. confirmat.

ſelfe judges to be incompetent. Theſe two great inſtances are enough, but if more were neceſſary I could inſtance in the opinion of the *Chiliſts*, maintained by the ſecond and third Centuries and diſavowed ever ſince: In the Doctrine of communicating Infants, taught and practiſed as neceſſary by the fourth and fifth Centuries, & deteſted by the Latine Church in all the following Ages: in the variety of opinions concerning the very form of baptiſm, ſome keeping cloſe to the inſtitution and the words of its firſt ſanction, others affirming it to be ſufficient, if it be adminiſtered *in nomine Chriſti*; particularly *S. Ambroſe*, Pope *Nicholas* the Firſt, *V. Bede* and *† S. Bernard* beſides ſome Writers of after Ages as *Hugo de S. Victore*, and the Doctours generally his contemporaries. And it would not be inconfiderable to obſerve, that if any Synod, General, Nationall, or Provinciall, be receded from by the Church of the later Age, (as there have been very many) then, ſo many Fathers as were then aſſembled and united in opinion are eſteemed no Authority to determine our perſwaſions. Now ſuppoſe 200 Fathers aſſembled in ſuch a Councell, if all they had writ Books, and Authorities, 200 Authorities had beene alleadged in confirmation of an opinion, it would have made a mighty noiſe, and loaded any man with an inſupportable prejudice that ſhould diſſent: And yet every opinion maintained againſt the Authority of any one Councell, though but Provinciall, is in its proportion ſuch a violent reſeſſion and neglect of the Authority and doctrine of ſo many Fathers as were then aſſembled, who did as much declare their opinion in thoſe Aſſemblies by their Suffrages, as if they had writ it in ſo many books; and their opinion is more conſiderable in the Aſſembly then in their writings, becauſe it was more deliberate, aſſiſted, united and more dogmaticall. In purſuance of this obſervation, it is to be noted by way of inſtance, that *S. Auſtin* and two hundred and ſeventeene Biſhops and all their Succeſſors* for a whole Age together did conſent in denying appeals to *Rome*; and yet the Authority of ſo many Fathers (all true Catholicks) is of no force now at *Rome* in this Queſtion; but if it be in a matter they like, one of theſe Fa-

De conſecrat.
diſt. 4. c. 2
quod in lud. ro
In cal. 10. Act.
† Ep. 340.

* Vid. Epiſt.
Bonifacii II.
apud Nicoli-
num, Tom. 2.
Concil. pag.
544. & exem-
plar precum
Eulahi apud
eund. m. ibid.
p. 525. Qui a-
nathematizat
omnes decifo-
res ſuos qui in
in ea cauſa
Romæ ſe op-
ponendo recte
fidei regulam

prævaricati ſunt, inter quos tamen fuit Auguſtinus, quem pro maledicto Celeſtinus ta-
cite agnoſcit, admitendo ſe. exen p. ar. precum. Vid. Doct. Mart. de Juriſſic. part. 4.
p. 273. • Pruſm. annot. in Hieron. præfat. in Daniel.

thers alone is ſufficient. The Doctrins of *S. Auſtin* alone brought in the feſtival and veneration of the aſſumption of the bleſſed Virgin, and the hard ſentence paſſed at *Rome* upon unbaptized Infants and the *Dominican* opinion concerning predeſtination, derived from him alone as from their Originall: ſo that if a Father ſpeaks for them, it is wonderfull to ſee what Tragedies are ſtirred up againſt them that diſſent, as is to be ſeen in that excellent nothing of *Campian's* ten reaſons. But if the Fathers be againſt them, then *Patres in quibusdam non levis lapſi ſunt* ſayes *Berllarmine*, and *conſtat quosdam ex præcipuis*, it is certain the chiefſt of them have ſouly erred. Nay, *Peſa*, *Salmeron*, and *Wadding* in the Queſtion of the immaculate conception make no ſcruple to diſſent from Antiquity; to preſerve new Doctōrs, before the Old, and to juſtifie themſelves, bring inſtances in which the Church of *Rome* had determin'd againſt the Fathers. And it is not excuſe enough to ſay that ſingly the Fathers may erre, but if they concur they are certain Teſtimony. For there is no queſtion this day diſputed by perſons that are willing to be tryed by the Fathers, ſo generally attested on either ſide, as ſome points are which both ſides diſlike ſeverally or conjunctly. And therefore tis not honeſt for either ſide to preſſe the Authority of the Fathers, as a concluding Argument in matter of diſpute, unleſſe themſelves will bee content to ſubmit in all things to the Teſtimony of an equal number of them, which I am certain neither ſide will doe.

De verb. Dei
l. 3. c. 10. §.
diceſſ.

Numb. 3.

3. If I ſhould reckon all the particular reaſons againſt the certainty of this topick, it would be more then needs as to this Queſtion, and therefore I will abſtaine from all diſparagement of thoſe worthy Perſonages, who were excellent lights to their ſeverall Dioceſes, and Cures. And therefore I will not inſtance that *Clement Alexandrinus* taught that Chriſt felt no hunger or thirſt, but eat only to make demonſtration of the verity of his humane nature; Nor that *S. Hilary* taught that Chriſt in his ſufferings had no ſorrow; nor that *Origen* taught the paines of Hell nor to have an eternall duration; Nor that *S. Cyprian* taught rebaptization; nor that *Athenagoras* condemned ſecond marriages; nor that *S. John Damascen* ſaid, Chriſt only prayed in appearance, not really and in truth; I will let them all reſt

Sirom. l. 3. & 6.

in peace, and their memories in honour; for if I ſhould enquire into the particular probations of this Article, I muſt doe to them as I ſhould be forced to doe now; if any man ſhould ſay that the Writings of the School-men were excellent Argument and Authority to determine mens perſwaſions; I muſt conſider their writings, and obſerve their deſaillances, their contradictions, the weakneſſe of their Arguments, the miſ-allegations of Scripture, their inconſequent deductions, their falſe opinions, and all the weakneſſes of humanity, and the failings of their perſons, which no good man is willing to doe, unleſſe he be compell'd to it by a pretence that they are inſallible, or that they are followed by men even into errors or impiety. And therefore ſince there is enough in the former inſtances, to cure any ſuch miſperſwaſion and prejudice, I will not inſiſt in the innumerable particularities that might perſwade us to keep our Liberty intire or to uſe it diſcreetly. For it is not to be denyed but that great advantages are to be made by their writings, *et probabile eſt quod omnibus, quod pluribus, quod ſapientibus videtur*; If one wiſe man ſayes a thing, it is an Argument to me to believe it in its degree of probation, that is, proportionable to ſuch an aſſent as the Authority of a wiſe man can produce, and when there is nothing againſt it that is greater; and ſo in proportion higher and higher as more wiſe men (ſuch as the old Doctours were) doe aſſent it. But that which I complain of is that we look upon wiſe men that lived long agoe with ſo much veneration and miſtake, that we reverence them not for having been wiſe men, but that they lived long ſince. But when the Queſtion is concerning Authority, there muſt bee ſomething to build it on; a Divine Commandment, humane Sanction, excellency of ſpirit, and greatneſſe of underſtanding, on which things all humane Authority is regularly built. But now if we had lived in their times (for ſo we muſt look upon them now, as they did who without prejudice beheld them) I ſuppoſe we ſhould then have beheld them, as we in *England* look on thoſe Prelates, who are of great reputation for learning and ſanctity; here only is the difference; when perſons are living, their authority is depreſſed by their perſonall deſaillances, and the contrary intereſts of their contemporaries,

which diſband when they are dead, and leave their credit intire upon the reputation of thoſe excellent books, and monuments of learning and piety which are left behind: But beyond this why the Biſhop of *Hippo* ſhall have greater Authority then the Biſhop of the *Canaries*, *ceteris paribus*, I underſtand not. For did they that liv'd (to inſtance) in *S. Auſtine's* time believe all that he wrote? If they did, they were much too blame, or elle himſelfe was too blame for retracting much of it a little before his death; And if while he lived, his affirmative was no more Authority, then derives from the credit of one very wiſe man, againſt whom alſo very wiſe men were oppoſed; I know not why his Authority ſhould prevaile further now; For there is nothing added to the ſtrength of his reaſon, ſince that time, but only that he hath been in great eſteem with poſterity: And if that be all, why the opinion of the following Ages, ſhall be of more force then the opinion of the firſt Ages, againſt whom *S. Auſtin* in many things clearly did oppoſe himſelfe, I ſee no reaſon; or whether the firſt Ages were againſt him or no, yet that he is approved by the following Ages is no better Argument; for it makes his Authority not to be innate, but derived from the opinion of others, and ſo to be *precaria*, and to depend upon others, who if they ſhould change their opinions, and ſuch examples there have been many, then there were nothing left to urge our conſent to him; which when it was at the beſt, was only this, becauſe he had the good Fortune to be believed by them that came after, he muſt be ſo ſtill; and becauſe it was no Argument for the old Doctours before him, this will not be very good in his behalfe: The ſame I ſay of any company of them, I ſay not ſo of all of them, it is to no purpoſe to ſay it, for there is no Queſtion this day in conteſtation, in the explication of which all the old Writers did conſent: In the aſſignation of the Canon of Scripture, they never did conſent for ſix hundred yeares together, and then by that time the Biſhops had agreed indifferently well, and but indifferently, upon that, they fell out in twenty more; and except it be in the Apoſtels Creed, and Articles of ſuch nature, there is nothing which may with any colour be called a conſent, much leſſe Tradition Univerſall.

4. But I will rather chuſe to ſhew the uncertainty of this Topick by ſuch an Argument, which was not in the Fathers power to help, ſuch as makes no invaſion upon their great reputation, which I deſire ſhould be preſerved as ſacred as it ought. For other things, let who pleaſe read *Mr Daille du vray uſage des Peres*; But I ſhall only conſider that the Writings of the Fathers have been ſo corrupted by the intermixture of Hereticks, ſo many falſe books put forth in their names, ſo many of their Writings loſt which would more clearly have explicated their ſenſe, and at laſt an open profeſſion made, and a trade of making the Fathers ſpeak, not what themſelves thought, but what other men pleaſed, that it is a great inſtance of God's providence and care of his Church, that we have ſo much good preſerved in the Writings which we receive from the Fathers, and that all truth is not as clear gone, as is the certainty of their great Authority and reputation.

The publiſhing books with the inſcription of great names began in *S. Paul's* time; for ſome had troubled the Church of *Thellonica* with a falſe Epittle in *S. Paul's* name, againſt the inconvenience of which he arms them in *2 Theſſ. 2. 1.* And this increaſed daily in the Church. The *Arrians* wrote an Epittle to *Conſtantine*, under the name of *Athanaſius*, and the *Eutychians* wrote againſt *Cyrill of Alexandria* under the name of *Theodore*; and of the Age in which the ſeventh Synod was kept, *Erasmus* reports, *Libris falſo celebrium virorum titula commendatis ſeate omnia*. It was then a publicke buſineſſe, and a trick not more baſe then publick: But it was more ancient then ſo, and it is memorable in the books attributed to *S. Baſil*, containing thirty Chapters *de Spiritu Sancto*, whereof fifteen were plainly added by another hand under the covert of *S. Baſil*, as appears in the difference of the ſtile, in the impertinent digreſſions, againſt the cuſtome of that excellent man, by ſome paſſages contradictory to others of *S. Baſil*, by citing *Meletius* as dead before him, who yet lived three * years after him, and by the very frame and manner of the diſcourſe; and yet it was ſo handſomely carried, and ſo well ſerv'd the purpoſes of men, that it was quoted under the title of *S. Baſil* by many, but without naming the number of chapters, and by *S. John Damascen* in

Numb. 4.

Numb. 5.

Apoſt. Athanaſ. ad Conſtantine.
Vid. Baron.
A.D. 513.

* Vid. Baron.
in Annal.]

L. de imagin.
nat. 1.

* Nomocan.
tit. 1. cap. 3.

† V. Beda. de
gratiâ Chriſti
adv. Iulianum.

Greg. Arim.
2. ſent. diſt. 26.
q. 1. 43.

theſe words, *Baſilius in opere triginta capitum de Spiritu S. ad amphiloſchinum*, and to the ſame purpoſe, and in the number of 27 & 29. chapters he is cited by * *Phoſius*, by *Euthymius*, by *Burchard*, by *Zonaras*, *Baſamon* and *Nicephorus*; but for this ſee more in *Erasmus*'s his Preface upon this book of *S. Baſil*. There is an Epistle goes ſtill under the name of *S. Hierom ad Demetriadem virginem*, and is of great uſe in the Queſtion of Predeſtination, with its appendices, and yet a very † learned man 800 years agoe did believe it to be written by a *Pelagian*, and undertakes to confute divers parts of it, as being high and confident *Pelagianisme*, and written by *Julianus Episc. Eclanensis*, but *Gregorius Ariminensis* from *S. Auſtin* affumes it to have been written by *Pelagius* himſelfe. I might inſtance in too many; There is not any one of the Fathers who is eſteemed Author of any conſiderable number of books, that hath eſcaped untouched; But the abuſe in this kinde hath been ſo evident that now if any intereſſed perſon of any ſide be preſſed with an Authority very pregnant againſt him, he thinks to eſcape by accusing the Edition, or the Author, or the hands it paſſed through, or at laſt he therefore ſuſpects it, becauſe it makes againſt him; both ſides being reſolv'd that they are in the right, the Authorities that they admit, they will believe not to be againſt them; and they which are too plainly againſt them, ſhall be no Authorities: And indeed the whole world hath been ſo much abuſed that every man thinks he hath reaſon to ſuſpect whatſoever is againſt him, that is, what he pleaſe; which proceeeding only produces this truth, that there neither is nor can be any certainty, nor very much probability in ſuch Allegations.

Numb. 6.

But there is a worſe miſchiefe then this, beſides thoſe very many which are not yet diſcovered, which like the peſtilence deſtroyes in the dark, and growes into inconvenience more inſenſibly and more irremediably, and that is, corruption of particular places, by inserting words and altering them to contrary ſenſes: A thing which the Fathers of the ſixth Generall Synod complain'd of concerning the conſtitutions of *S. Clement*, *quibus jam olim ab iis qui à fide aliena ſentiant adulterina quadam etiam pietate aliena introducta ſunt quæ divinatorum nobis Decretorum elegantius*

Can. 2.

elegantem & v. n. n. speciem obcurant: And so also have his Recognitions; so have his Epistles been used, if at least they were his at all, particularly the fifth Decretall Epistle that goes under the name of *S. Clement*, in which community of Wives is taught upon the Authority of *S. Luke* saying the first Christians had all things common; if all things, then Wives also sayes the Epistle; a forgery like to have been done by some *Nicolaitan*, or other impure person: There is an Epistle of *Cyrrill* extant to *Successus* Bishop of *Diocæsarea*, in which he relates that hee was ask'd by *Budus* Bishop of *Emessa*, whether he did approve of the Epistle of *Athanasius* to *Epictetus* Bishop of *Corinth*, and that his answer was, *Si hac apud vos scripta non sint adultera: Nam plura ex his ab hostibus Ecclesie deprehenduntur esse depravata*: And this was done even while the Authors themselves were alive; for so *Dionysius* of *Corinth* complain'd that his writings were corrupted by Hereticks, and Pope *Leo*, that his Epistle to *Flavianus* was perverted by the Greeks: And in the Synod of *Constantinople* before quoted (the fixth Synod) *Macarius* and his Disciples were convicted *quod Sanctorum testimonia aut truncarint aut depravarint*: Thus the third Chapter of *S. Cyprians* book *de unitate Ecclesie* in the Edition of *Pamelius* suffered great alteration: These words [*Primatus Petro datur*] wholly inserted, and these [*super Cathedram Petri fundata est Ecclesia*] and whereat it was before, *super unum adificat Ecclesiam Christus*, that not being enough they have made it *super illum unum*. Now these Additions are against the faith of all old Copies, before *Minutius* and *Pamelius*, and against *Gratian*, even after himselfe had been chastiz'd by the Roman Correctors, the Commissaries of *Gregory XIII.*, as is to be seen where these words are alledged, *Decret. c. 24. Q. 1. can. loquitur Dominus ad Petrum*. So that we may say of *Cyprians* works as *Pamelius* himself said concerning his writings and the writings of other of the Fathers, *unde colligimus* (saith he) *Cypriani scripta ut & aliorum Veterum à librariis variè fuisse interpolata*. But *Gratian* himselfe could doe as fine a feat when he listed, or else some body did it for him, and it was in this very Question, their beloved Article of the Popes Supremacy; for *de penit. dist. 1. c. potest fieri*. he quotes these words out

Rufeb. l. 4 c. 23.

Act. 8. vid. etiam Synod. 7. a. 3. 4.

Annor. Cyprian. super. Concil. Carthage. n. 1.

of *S. Ambroſe*, *Non habent Petri hereditatem qui non habent Petri ſedem*; ſidem, not ſedem, it is in *S. Ambroſe*; but this error was made authentick by being inſerted into the Code of the Law of the Catholick Church; and conſidering how little notice the Clergy had of Antiquity, but what was tranſmitted to them by *Gratian*, it will be no great wonder that all this part of the world ſwallowed ſuch a bole and the opinion that was wrapped in it. But I need not inſtance in *Gratian* any further, but referre any one that deſires to be ſatiſfied concerning this Collection of his, to *Auguſtinus* Archbiſhop of *Tarracon* in *emendatione Gratiani*, where he ſhall find ſopperies and corruptions good ſtore noted by that learned man: But that the *Indices Expurgatorii* commanded by Authority, and practiſed with publike liſenſe profeſſe to alter and correct the ſayings of the Fathers, and to reconcile them to the Catholike ſenſe by putting in and leaving out, is ſo great an Impoſture, ſo unchriſtian a proceeding, that it hath made the faith of all books and all Authors juſtly to be ſuſpected; For conſidering their infinite diligence and great opportunity, as having had moſt of the Copies in their own hands, together with an unſatiſfiable deſire of prevailing in their right or in their wrong, they have made an abſolute deſtruction of this Topick, and when the Fathers ſpeak * Latine, or breathe in a Roman Dioceſe, although the providence of God does infinitely over-rule them, and that it is next to a miracle that in the Monuments of Antiquity, there is no more ſound that can pretend for their advantage then there is, which indeed is infinitely inconfiderable: Yet our Queſtions and uncertainties are infinitely multiplied in ſtead of a probable and reaſonable determination. For ſince the Latines alwayes complain'd of the Greeks for privately corrupting the Ancient Records both of Councils and † Fathers, and now the Latines make open profeſſion not of corrupting, but of correcting their writings (that's the word) and at the moſt it was but a humane authority, and that of perſons not alwayes learned, and very often deceiv'd; the whole matter is ſo unreaſonable, that it is not worth a further diſquiſition. But if any one deſires to enquire further, he may be ſatiſfied in *Erasmus*, in *Henry* and *Robert Stephens*, in their Prefaces before

Vid. Ind. Expurg. Belg. in Bertram. & Flandr. Hiſpan: Portuga. Neapolitan. Romanum. Iunium in præfat. ad Ind. Expurg. Belg. Haſenmullerum, pag. 275. Wiſhing-ton. Apolog. num. 449.

* Videat Lector Andream Criſtoſium in Beſſo Jeſuitico, & Job. Reynolds in libr. de idol. Rom.

† Vid. Ep. Nicolai ad Michael. Imperat.

before the Editions of Fathers, and their Observations upon them: in *Belarmine de script. Eccles.* in Dr. *Reynolds, de libris Apocryphis*, in *Scaliger*, and *Robert Coke of Leedes in Yorkshire*, in his Book *De censura Patrum*.

SECT. IX.

Of the incompetency of the Church in its diffusive capacity to be judge of Controversies, and the impertinency of that pretence of the Spirit.

AND now after all these considerations of the severall *Toppicks*, Tradition, Councils, Popes and ancient Doctors of the Church, I suppose it will not be necessary, to consider the authority of the Church apart. For the Church either speaks by Tradition, or by a representative body in a Council, by Popes, or by the Fathers: for the Church is not a *Chimera*, not a shadow, but a company of men beleeving in Jesus Christ, which men either speak by themselves immediately, or by their Rulers, or by their proxies and representatives; now I have considered it in all senses but in its diffusive capacity; in which capacity she cannot be supposed to be a Judge of Controversies, both because in that capacity she cannot teach us, as also because if by a Judge we mean all the Church diffused in all its parts and members, so there can be no controversie, for if all men be of that opinion, then there is no question contested; if they be not all of a mind, how can the whole diffusive Catholike Church be pretended in defiance of any one article, where the diffusive Church being divided, part goes this way, and part another? But if it be said, the greatest part must carry it; Besides that it is impossible for us to know which way the greatest part goes in many questions, it is not alwaies true that the greater part is the best, sometimes the contrary is most certain, and it is often very probable, but it is alwaies possible. And when paucity of followers was objected to *Liberius*, he gave this in answer, There was a time when but three Children of the Captivity resisted the Kings Decree. And *Athanasius* wrote on purpose against those that did judge of truth by multitudes, and indeed it concerned him so to doe, when he alone stood in the gap against the numerous armies of the *Arrians*.

Numb. 1.

Theod. 1. 2. c. 16. hist.

Tom. 2.

Numb. 2.

But if there could in this case be any distinct consideration of the Church, yet to know which is the true Church is so hard to be found out, that the greatest questions of Christendome are judged before you can get to your Judge, and then there is no need of him. For those questions which are concerning the Judge of questions must be determined before you can submit to his judgement, and if you can your selves determine those great questions which consist much in universalities, then also you may determine the particulars as being of less difficulty. And he that considers how many notes there are given to know the true Church, no less then 15. by *Bellarmino*, and concerning every one of them almost whether it be a certaine note or no there are very many questions and uncertainties, and when it is resolved which are the notes, there is more dispute about the application of these notes then of the *hermaphroditum*, will quickly be satisfied that he had better sit still then to goe round about a difficult and troublesome passage, and at last get no further, but returne to the place from whence he first set out. And there is one note amongst the rest, Holines of Doctrine, that is, so as to have nothing false either in *Doctrina fidei* or *morum*, (for so *Bellarmino* explicates it) which supposes all your Controversies, judged before they can be tryed by the authority of the Church, and when we have found out all true Doctrine (for that is necessary to judge of the Church by, that as Saint *Austin's* counsell is *Ecclesiam in verbis Christi investigemus*) then we are bound to follow because we judge it true, not because the Church hath said it, and this is to judge of the Church by her Doctrine, not of the Doctrine by the Church. And indeed it is the best and only way; But then how to judge of that Doctrine will be afterwards inquired into. In the meane time, the Church, that is, the Governours of the Churches are to judge for themselves, & for all those who cannot judge for themselves. For others, they must know that their Governours judge for them too, so as to keepe them in peace and obedience, though not for the determination of their private perswasions. For the Oeconomy of the Church requires that her authority be received by all her children. Now this authority is divine in its original, for it derives immediately from Christ, but it is humane in its ministration. We are to be lead like men not like beasts; A rule is pre-

preſcribed for the guides themſelves to follow, as we are to follow the guides; and although in matters indeterminable or ambiguous the preſumption lyes on behalfe of the Governours, (for we do nothing for authority if we ſuffer it not to weigh that part down of an indifferency and a queſtion which ſhe chooſes) yet if there be *error manifeſtus*, as it often happens, or if the Church-Governours themſelves be rent into innumerable ſects, as it is this day in Chriſtendome, then we are to be as wiſe as we can in chooſing our guides, and then to follow ſo long as that reaſon remains for which we firſt choſe them. And even in that Government which was an immediate ſanction of God, I mean the Eccleſiaſtical government of the Synagogue, where God had conſign'd the High-Prieſts authority with a menace of death to them that ſhould diſobey, that all the world might know the meaning and extent of ſuch precepts, and that there is a limit beyond which they cannot command, and we ought not to obey: it came once to that paſſ; that if the Prieſt had been obeyed in his Conciliary decrees, the whole Nation had been bound to believe the condemnation of our bleſſed Saviour to have been juſt, and at another time the Apoſtles muſt no more have preached in the name of Jeſus. But here was manifeſt error. And the caſe is the ſame to every man that invincibly and therefore innocently believes it ſo. *Deo potius quam hominibus* is our rule in ſuch caſes. For although every man is bound to follow his guide, unleſs he believes his guide to miſlead him; yet when he ſees reaſon againſt his guide, it is beſt to follow his reaſon: for though in this he may fall into error, yet he will eſcape the ſin; he may doe violence to truth, but never to his own conſcience; and an honeſt error is better then an hypocriticall profeſſion of truth, or a violent ſuraxation of the underſtanding, ſince if he retains his honeſty and ſimplicity, he cannot erre in a matter of faith or abſolute neceſſity: Gods goodneſs hath ſecur'd all honeſt and carefull perſons from that; for other things, he muſt follow the beſt guides he can, and he cannot be obliged to follow better then God hath given him.

And there is yet another way pretended of infallible Expositions of Scripture; and that is, by the Spirit. But of this I ſhall ſay no more, but that it is impertinent as to this queſtion.

Numb. 3.

For put case the Spirit is given to some men, enabling them to expound infallibly, yet because this is but a private assistance, and cannot be proved to others, this infallible assistance may determine my own assent, but shall not enable me to prescribe to others, because it were unreasonable I should, unless I could prove to him that I have the Spirit, and so can secure him from being deceived, if he relies upon me. In this case I may say as *S. Paul* in the case of praying with the Spirit, *He verily giveth thanks well, but the other is not edified.* So that let this pretence be as true as it will, it is sufficient that it cannot be of consideration in this question.

Numb. 4.

The result of all is this ; Since it is not reasonable to limit and prescribe to all mens understandings by any externall rule in the interpretation of difficult places of Scripture which is our rule : Since no man nor company of men is secure from error, or can secure us that they are free from malice, interest and design ; and since all the wayes by which we usually are taught, as Tradition, Councils, Decretals, &c. are very uncertain in the matter, in their authority, in their being legitimate and naturall, and many of them certainly false, and nothing certain but the divine authority of Scripture, in which all that is necessary is plain, and much of that that is not necessary is very obscure, intricate and involv'd, either we must set up our rest, onely upon articles of faith, and plain places, and be incurious of other obscurer revelations, (which is a duty for persons of private understandings, and of no publike function) or if we will search further (to which in some measure the guides of others are obliged) it remains we inquire how men may determine themselves, so as to doe their duty to God, and not to diserve the Church, that every such man may doe what he is bound to, in his personall capacity, and as he relates to the publike as a publike minister.

SECT.

SECT. X.

Of the authority of Reason, and that it proceeding upon best grounds is the best judge,

Here then I consider, that although no man may be trusted to judge for all others, unless this person were infallible and authorized so to doe, which no man nor no company of men is, yet every man may be trusted to judge for himself, I say every man that can judge at all, (as for others they are to be saved as it pleaseth God) but others that can judge at all must either choose their guides who shall judge for them, (and then they oftentimes doe the wisest, and alwayes save themselves a labour, but then they choose too) or if they be persons of greater understanding, then they are to choose for themselves in particular, what the others doe in generall, and by choosing their guide; and for this any man may be better trusted for himselfe then any man can be for another: For in this case his own interest is most concerned; and ability is not so necessary as honesty, which certainly every man will best preserve in his owne case, and to himselfe, (and if he does not, it is he that must smart for't) and it is not required of us not to be in errour, but that we endeavour to avoid it.

2. He that followes his guide so far as his reason goes along with him, or which is all one, he that followes his owne reason (not guided onely by naturall arguments, but by divine revelation, and all other good meanes) hath great advantages over him that gives himselfe wholly to follow any humane guide whatsoever, because he followes all their reasons and his own too; he follows them till reason leaves them, or till it seemes so to him, which is all one to his particular, for by the confession of all sides, an erroneous Conscience binds him, when a right guide does not bind him. But he that gives himselfe up wholly to a guide is oftentimes (I meane, if he be a discerning person) forc'd to doe violence to his own understanding, and to lose all the benefit of his owne discretion, that he may reconcile his reason to his guide. And of this we see infinite inconveniences in the Church of Rome,

for we finde perſons of great underſtanding, oftentimes ſo amuſed with the authority of their Church, that it is pity to ſee them ſweat in anſwering ſome objections, which they know not how to doe, but yet beleeveth they muſt, becauſe the Church hath ſaid it. So that if they reade, ſtudy, pray, ſearch records, and uſe all the means of art and induſtry in the purſuite of truth, it is not with a reſolution to follow that which ſhall ſeem truth to them, but to confirm what before they did beleeveth: and if any argument ſhall ſeeme unanſwerable againſt any Article of their Church, they are to take it for a temptation, not for an illumination, and they are to uſe it accordingly: which makes them make the Devill to be the Author of that which Gods Spirit hath aſſiſted them to find in the uſe of lawfull means and the ſearch of truth. And when the Devill of falſhood is like to be caſt out by Gods Spirit, they ſay that it is through *Beelzebub*; which was one of the worſt things that ever the Pharifees ſaid or did: And was it not a plain ſtifling of the juſt and reasonable demands made by the Emperour, by the Kings of *France* and *Spaine*, and by the ableſt Divines among them which was uſed in the Councell of *Trent*, when they demanded the reſtitution of Priests to their liberty of marriage, the uſe of the Chalice, the Service in the vulgar Tongue, and theſe things not onely in purſuance of Truth, but for other great and good ends, even to take away an infinite ſcandall and a great ſchiſme? And yet when they themſelves did profeſs it, and all the world knew theſe reasonable demands were denyed meerly upon a politick conſideration, yet that theſe things ſhould be fram'd into articles, and decrees of faith, and they for ever after bound not onely not to deſire the ſame things, but to think the contrary to be divine truths: never was Reaſon made more a ſlave or more uſeleſs. Muſt not all the world ſay, either they muſt be great hypocrites, or doe great violence to their underſtanding, when they not onely ceaſe from their claim, but muſt alſo beleeveth it to be unjuſt? If the uſe of their reaſon had not been reſtrained by the tyrannie & imperiouſneſs of their guide, what the Emperour, and the Kings, and their Theologues would have done, they can beſt judge who conſider the reaſonableneſs of the demand, and the unreaſonableneſs of the denyall. But we ſee many wiſe men who with their *Oportandum eſſet ut Eccleſia*

clēsa licentiam daret, &c. proclaim to all the world, that in some things they consent and doe not consent, and doe not heartily beleeve what they are bound publickly to profess, and they themselves would cleerly see a difference, if a contrary decree should be fram'd by the Church, they would with an infinite greater confidence rest themselves in other propositions then what they must beleeve as the case now stands, and they would find that the authority of a Church is a prejudice as often as a free and modest use of reason is a temptation.

3. God will have no man pressed with anothers inconveniences in matters spirituall and intellectuall, no mans salvation to depend upon another, and every tooth that eats sowre grapes shall be set on edge for it selfe, and for none else: and this is remarkable in that saying of God by the Prophet, *If the Prophet ceases to tell my people of their sins, and leads them into error, the people shall die in their sins, and the blood of them I will require at the hands of that Prophet*: Meaning, that God hath so set the Prophets to guide us, that we also are to follow them by a voluntary assent by an act of choice and election. For although accidentally and occasionally the sheep may perish by the shepherds fault, yet that which hath the chiefest influence upon their small condition, is their owne act and election, and therefore God hath so appointed guides to us, that if we perish, it may be accounted upon both our scores, upon our own and the guides too, which sayes plainly, that although we are intrusted to our guides, yet we are intrusted to our selves too. Our guides must direct us, and yet if they faile, God hath not so left us to them, but he hath given us enough to our selves to discover their failings, and our own duties in all things necessary. And for other things we must doe as well as we can. But it is best to follow our guides, if we know nothing better; but if we doe, it is better to follow the pillar of fire, than a pillar of cloud, though both possibly may lead to *Canaan*: But then also it is possible that it may be otherwise. But I am sure if I doe my own best, then if it be best to follow a Guide, and if it be also necessary, I shall be sure by Gods grace and my own endeavour, to get to it; But if I without the particular ingagemēt of my own understanding, follow a guide, possibly I may be guilty of extream negligence, or I may extinguish Gods

Numb. 3.

Ezek. 33.

Spirit,

Spirit, or doe violence to my own reason. And whether intrusting my self wholly with another, be not a laying up my talent in a napkin, I am not so well assured. I am certain the other is not. And since another mans answering for me will not hinder, but that I also shall answer for my self; as it concerns him to see he does not wilfully misguide me, so it concerns me to see that he shall not if I can help it, if I cannot it will not be required at my hands: whether it be his fault, or his invincible error, I shall be charg'd with neither.

Numb. 4.

4. This is no other then what is enjoyned as a duty. For since God will be justified with a free obedience, and there is an obedience of understanding as well as of will and affection, it is of great concernment, as to be willing to beleieve what ever God sayes, so also to enquire diligently whether the will of God be so as is pretended. Even our acts of understanding are acts of choice, and therefore it is commanded as a duty, *to search the Scriptures, to try the Spirits whether they be of God or no, of our selves to be able to judge what is right, to try all things, and to retaine that which is best.* For he that resolves not to consider, resolves not to be careful whether he have truth or no, and therefore hath an affection indifferent to truth or falsehood, which is all one as if he did choose amiss; and since when things are truly propounded and made reasonable and intelligible we cannot but assent, and then it is no thanks to us; we have no way to give our wills to God in matters of beleife, but by our industry in searching it and examining the grounds upon which the propounders build their dictates. And the not doing it is oftentimes a cause that God gives a man over *ut in Adam*, into a reprobate and undiscerning mind and understanding.

Numb. 5.

5. And this very thing (though men will not understand it) is the perpetuall practice of all men in the world that can give a reasonable account of their faith. The very Catholike Church it selfe is *rationabilis & ubiq; diffusa*, saith *Optatus*, reasonable, as well as diffused, every where. For take the Proselytes of the Church of Rome, even in their greatest submission of understanding, they seem to themselves to follow their reason most of all. For if you tell them, Scripture and Tradition are their rules to follow, they will beleieve you when they know a reason for it, and

Mat. 23. 10.

Joh. 5. 40.

1 Joh. 4. 1.

Ephes. 5. 17.

Luk. 24. 25.

Rom. 3. 11.

1. 28.

Apoc. 2. 2.

Act. 17. 11.

Lib. 3.

and if they take you upon your word, they have a reason for that too, either they beleieve you a learned man, or a good man, or that you can have no ends upon them, or something that is of an equall height to fit their understandings. If you tell them they must beleieve the Church, you must tell them why they are bound to it, and if you quote Scripture to prove it, you must give them leave to judge, whether the words alledged speak your sense or no, and therefore to dissent if they say no such thing. And although all men are not wise, and proceed discretely, yet all make their choice some way or other. He that chooses to please his fancie takes his choice as much, as he that chooses prudently. And no man speaks more unreasonably, then he that denyes to men the use of their Reason in choice of their Religion. For that I may by the way remove the common prejudice, Reason and Authority are not things incompetent or repugnant, especially when the Authority is infallible and supreme: for there is no greater reason in the world then to beleieve such an authority. But then we must consider, whether every authority that pretends to be such, is so indeed. And therefore *Deus dixit, ergo hoc verum est*, is the greatest demonstration in the world for things of this nature. But it is not so in humane dictates, and yet reason and humane authority are not enemies. For it is a good argument for us to follow such an opinion, because it is made sacred by the authority of Councells and Ecclesiasticall Tradition, and sometimes it is the best reason we have in a question, and then it is to be strictly followed; but there may also be at other times a reason greater than it that speaks against it, and then the authority must not carry it. But then the difference is not between reason and authority, but between this reason and that, which is greater: for authority is a very good reason, and is to prevaile, unless a stronger comes and disarms it, but then it must give place. So that in this question by [*Reason*] I doe not meane a distinct Topick, but a transcendent that runs through all Topicks; for Reason, like Logick, is instrument of all things else, and when Revelation, and Philosophie, and publick Experience, and all other grounds of probability or demonstration have supplied us with matter, then Reason does but make use of them; that is, in plain terms, there being so many wayes of arguing, so many sects, such differing interests, such

variety of authority, so many pretences, and so many false beliefs, it concerns every wise man to consider which is the best argument, which proposition relies upon the truest grounds: & if this were not his only way, why doe men dispute and urge arguments, why do they cite Councils & Fathers, why do they alledge Scripture and Tradition, and all this on all sides, and to contrary purposes? If we must judge, then we must use our reason; if we must not judge, why doe they produce evidence? Let them leave disputing and decree propositions magisterially, but then we may choose whether we will believe them or no; or if they say we must believe them, they must prove it, and tell us why. And all these disputes concerning Tradition, Councils, Fathers, &c. are not arguments against or besides reason, but contestations and pretences to the best arguments, and the most certain satisfaction of our reason. But then all these coming into question, submit themselves to reason, that is, to be judged by humane understanding, upon the best grounds and information it can receive. So that Scripture, Tradition, Councils, and Fathers, are the evidence in a question, but Reason is the Judge: That is, we being the persons that are to be perswaded, we must see that we be perswaded reasonably, and it is unreasonable to assent to a lesser evidence, when a greater and clearer is propounded, but of that every man for himselfe is to take cognisance if he be able to judge, if he be not, he is not bound under the tie of necessity to know any thing of it; that, that is necessary shall be certainly conveyed to him, God that best can, will certainly take care for that; for if he does not, it becomes to be not necessary; or if it should still remain necessary, and he damned for not knowing it, and yet to know it be not in his power, then who can help it? there can be no further care in this business. In other things, there being no absolute and prime necessity, we are left to our liberty to judge that way that makes best demonstration of our piety and of our love to God and truth, not that way that is alwayes the best argument of an excellent understanding, for this may be a blessing, but the other only is a duty.

Numb. 6.

And now that we are pitch'd upon that way which is most naturall and reasonable in determination of our selves rather then of questions, which are often indeterminable, since right reason pro-

proceeding upon the best grounds it can, *viz.* of divine revelation and humane authority, and probability is our guide, (*Stando in humanis*) and supposing the assistance of Gods Spirit (which he never denies them that faile not of their duty in all such things in which he requires truth and certainty) it remaines that we consider how it comes to pass that men are so much deceived in the use of their reason, and choice of their Religion, and that in this account we distinguish those accidents which make error innocent from those which make it become a heresie.

SECT. XI.

Of some causes of Error in the exercise of Reason which are inculpate in themselves.

1. **T**HEN I consider, that there are a great many inculpable causes of Error, which are arguments of humane imperfections, not convictions of a sinne. And (1.) the variety of humane understandings is so great, that what is plaine and apparent to one, is difficult and obscure to another; one will observe a consequent from a common principle, and another from thence will conclude the quite contrary. When *S. Peter* saw the vision of the sheet let downe with all sorts of beasts in it, and a voice saying, *Surge Petre, malla & manduca*, if he had not by a particular assistance bene directed to the meaning of the holy Ghost, possibly he might have had other apprehensions of the meaning of that vision, for to my selfe it seemes naturally to speake nothing but the abolition of the Mosaicall rites, and the restitution of us to that part of Christian liberty which consists in the promiscuous eating of meates; and yet besides this, there want not some understandings in the world, to whom these words seeme to give Saint *Peter* a power to kill hereticall Princes. Me thinks it is a strange understanding that makes such extractions, but *Bozius* and *Baronius* did so. But men may understand what they please, especially when they are to expound Oracles. It was an argument of some wit, but of singularity of understanding, that hapned in the great contestation betwene the Mifsalls of Saint *Ambrose* and Saint *Gregory*. The lot was throwne, and God made

Numb. 1.

to be Judge, ſo as he was tempted to a miracle, to answer a queſtion which themſelves might have ended without much trouble. The two Miſſals were laid upon the Altar, & the Church door ſhut and ſealed. By the morrow Mattins they found *S. Gregories* Miſſall torne in pieces (ſaith the ſtory) and thrown about the Church, but *S. Ambroſe's* open'd and laid upon the Altar in a poſture of being read. If I had been to judge of the meaning of this Miracle, I ſhould have made no ſcruple to have ſaid it had been the will of God that the Miſſall of *S. Ambroſe* which had been anciently uſed, and publickly tryed and approved of, ſhould ſtill be read in the Church, and that of *Gregory* let alone, it being torn by an Angelicall hand as an argument of its imperfection, or of the inconvenience of innovation. But yet they judg'd it otherwiſe, for by the tearing and ſcattering about, they thought it was meant, it ſhould be uſed over all the world, and that of *S. Ambroſe* read onely in the Church of *Millaine*. I am more ſatisfied that the former was the true meaning, then I am of the truth of the ſtory: But we muſt ſuppoſe that. And now there might have been eternal diſputings about the meaning of the miracle, and nothing left to determine, when two fancies are the litigants, and the conteſtations about probabilities *hinc inde*. And I doubt not this was one cauſe of ſo great variety of opinions in the Primitive Church, when they proved their ſeverall opinions which were myſterious queſtions of Chriſtian Theologie, by teſtimonies out of the obſcurer Prophets, out of the Pſalmes and Canticles, as who pleaſe to obſerve their arguments of diſcourſe and actions of Council ſhall perceive they very much uſed to doe. Now although mens underſtandings be not equall, and that it is fit the beſt underſtandings ſhould prevaiſe, yet that will not ſatiſfie the weaker underſtandings, becauſe all men will not think that another underſtanding is better then his own, at leaſt not in ſuch a particular, in which with fancy he hath pleaſed himſelf. But commonly they that are leaſt able, are moſt bold, and the more ignorant is the more confident, therefore it is but reaſon if he would have another beare with him, he alſo ſhould beare with another, and if he will not be preſcribed to, neither let him preſcribe to others. And there is the more reaſon in this, becauſe ſuch modeſty is commonly to be deſired of the more imperfect; for wiſe men know.

know the ground of their perſwaſion, and have their confidence proportionable to their evidence, others have not, but over-aſt their triſles : and therefore I ſaid it is but a reaſonable demand, that they that have the leaſt reaſon ſhould not be moſt imperious ; and for others it being reaſonable enough, for all their great advantages upon other men, they will be ſoone perſwaded to it ; for although wiſe men might be bolder, in reſpect of the perſons of others leſs diſcerning, yet they know there are but few things ſo certaine as to create much boldneſs and confidence of aſſertion, If they doe not, they are not the men I take them for.

2. When an action or opinion is commenc'd with zeale and piety againſt a knowne vice or a vitious perſon, commonly all the miſtakes of it's proceeding are made ſacred by the holineſs of the principle, and ſo abuſes the perſwaſions of good people, that they make it as a Characteriſtick note to diſtinguiſh good perſons from bad ; and then whatever error is ſanctified by this means, is therefore made the more laſting, becauſe it is accounted holy, and the perſons are not eaſily accounted hereticks, becauſe they erred upon a pious principle. There is a memorable inſtance in one of the greateſt queſtions of Chriſtendome, *viz.* concerning Images. For when *Philippicus* had eſpyed the images of the ſix firſt Synods upon the front of a Church, he cauſed them to be pulled down ; now he did it in hatred of the ſixth Synod : for he being a Monothelite, ſtood condemn'd by that Synod. The Catholiques that were zealous for the ſixth Synod, cauſed the images and repreſentments to be put up againe, and then ſprung the queſtion concerning the lawfullneſs of images in Churches ; *Philippicus* and his party ſtrived by ſuppreſſing images to do diſparagement to the ſixth Synod : the Catholiques to preſerve the honour of the ſixth Synod, would uphold images. And then the queſtion came to be changed, and they who were eaſie enough to be perſwaded to pull downe images, were over-awed by a prejudice againſt the *Monothelites*, and the *Monothelites* ſtriv'd to maintaine the advantage they had got by a juſt and pious pretence againſt images. The *Monothelites* would have ſecur'd their error by the advantage and conſociation of a truth, & the other would rather defend a dubious and diſputable error, than loſe and let

Numb. 2.

Vid. Paulum
Diaconum.

goe a certain truth. And thus the caſe ſtood, and the ſucceſſors of both parts were led invincibly. For when the Hereſie of the Monothelites diſbanded, (which it did in a while after) yet the opinion of the Iconoclaſts, & the queſtion of Images grew ſtronger. Yet ſince the Iconoclaſts at the firſt were Heretiques, not for their breaking Images, but for denying the two wils of Chriſt, his Divine and his Humane: that they were called Iconoclaſts was to diſtinguiſh their opinion in the queſtion concerning the Images, but that then Iconoclaſts ſo eaſily had the reputation of Hereticks, was becauſe of the other opinion which was conjunct in their perſons; which opinion men afterwards did not eaſily diſtinguiſh in them, but took them for Hereticks in groſs, and whatſoever they held to be hereticall. And thus upon this prejudice grew great advantages to the veneration of Images, and the perſons at firſt were much to be excuſed, becauſe they were miſguided by that which might have abuſed the beſt men. And if *Epiphanius* who was as zealous againſt Images in Churches as *Philippicus* or *Leo Iſaurus*, had but begun a publike conteſtation, and engaged Emperours to have made Decrees againſt them, Chriſtendom would have had other apprehenſions of it, then they had when the Monothelites began it. For few men will endure a truth from the mouth of the Devill, and if the perſon be ſuſpected, ſo are his wayes too. And it is a great ſubtlety of the Devill ſo to temper truth and falſhood in the ſame perſon, that truth may loſe much of its reputation by its mixture with error, and the error may become more plauſible by reaſon of its conjunction with truth. And this we ſee by too much experience, for we ſee many truths are blaſted in their reputation, becauſe perſons whom we think we hate upon juſt grounds of Religion, have taught them. And it was plain enough in the caſe of *Maldonat*, that ſaid of an explication of a place of Scripture, that it was moſt agreeable to Antiquity, but becauſe *Calvin* had ſo expounded it, he therefore choſe a new one. This was malice. But when a prejudice works tacitely, undiſcernably, and irreſiſtably of the perſon ſo wrought upon, the man is to be pityed, not condemned, though poſſibly his opinion deſerves it highly. And therefore it hath been uſuall to diſcredit doctrines by the perſonall deſaillances of them that preach them: or with the diſreputation of that ſect

In cap 6. lo-
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ſect that maintains them in conjunction with other perverſe doctrines. *Fauftus* the Manichee in *S. Auſtin*, glories much, that in their Religion God was worſhipped purely and without Images. *S. Auſtin* liked it well, for ſo it was in his too, but from hence *Sanders* concludes, that to pull down Images in Churches was the hereſie of the Manichees. The Jews endure no Images, therefore *Bellarmino* makes it to be a piece of Judaifme to oppoſe them. He might as well have concluded againſt ſaying our prayers, and Church muſick, that it is Judaicall, becauſe the Jews uſed it. And he would be loth to be ſerved ſo himſelf, for he that had a mind to uſe ſuch arguments, might with much better probability conclude againſt their Sacrament of extreme unction, becauſe when the miraculous healing was ceaſed, then they were not Catholiques, but Heretiques that did transferre it to the uſe of dying perſons, (ſayes *Irenæus*;) for ſo did the Valentinians: And indeed this argument is ſomething better then I thought for at firſt, becauſe it was in *Irenæus* time reckoned among the hereſies. But there are a ſort of men that are even with them, and hate ſome good things which the Church of *Rome* teaches, becauſe ſhe who teaches ſo many errors, hath been the publiſher, and 'is the practicer of thoſe things. I confeſs the thing is alwayes unreaſonable, but ſometimes it is invincible and innocent; and then may ſerve to abate the fury of all ſuch decratory ſentences, as condemne all the world but their own Diſciples.

3. There are ſome opinions that have gone hand in hand with a bleſſing, and a proſperous profeſſion; and the good ſucceſs of their defenders hath amuſed many good people, becauſe they thought they heard Gods voice where they ſaw Gods hand, and therefore have ruſhed upon ſuch opinions with great piety and as great miſtaking. For where they once had entertain'd a feare of God, and apprehenſion of his ſo ſenſible declaration, ſuch a feare produces ſcruple, and a ſcrupulous conſcience is alwayes to be pityed, becauſe though it is ſeldome wiſe, it is alwayes pious. And this very thing hath prevail'd ſo farre upon the underſtandings even of wiſe men, that *Bellarmino* makes it a note of the true Church. Which opinion when it prevails is a ready way to make, that inſtead of Martyrs all men ſhould prove hereticks or apoſtates in perſecution; for ſince men in miſery are very ſuſpicious,

L. 10. c. 3. cont.
Fauſtus Man.
1. 1. c. ult. de
Imagin.

Dereliq. SS.
1. 2. c. 6. ſect.
Nicolaus.

L. 1. c. 8. adv.
1. 2.

Numb. 3.

ous, out of ſtrong deſires to finde out the cauſe, that by removing it they may be relieved, they apprehend that to be it that is firſt preſented to their fears; and then if ever truth be aſſiſted, ſhe ſhall alſo be deſtroyed. I will ſay nothing in defiance of this fancy, although all the experience in the world ſayes it is falſe, and that of all men Chriſtians ſhould leaſt believe it to be true, to whom a perpetuall croſſe is their certain expectation, (and the argument is like the Moone, for which no garment can be fit, it alters according to the ſucceſs of humane affairs, and in one age will ſerve a Papiſt, and in another a Proteſtant) yet when ſuch an opinion does prevaile upon timorous perſons, the malignity of their error (if any be conſequent to this fancie, and taken up upon the reputation of a prosperous hereſie) is not to be conſidered ſimply and nakedly, but abatement is to be made in a juſt proportion to that ſcare, and to that apprehenſion.

Numb. 4.

4. Education is ſo great and ſo invincible a prejudice, that he who maſters the inconvenience of it, is more to be commended than he can juſtly be blam'd that complies with it. For men doe not alwayes call them principles which are the prime fountaines of reaſon, from whence ſuch conſequents naturally flow, as are to guide the actions and diſcourſes of men; but they are principles which they are firſt taught, which they ſuck in next to their milke, and by a proportion to thoſe firſt principles they uſually take their eſtimate of propoſitions. For whatſoever is taught to them at firſt they believe infinitely, for they know nothing to the contrary, they have had no other maſters, whoſe theoremes might abate the ſtrength of their firſt perſwaſions, and it is a great advantage in thoſe caſes to get poſſeſſion; and before their firſt principles can be diſlodg'd, they are made habituall and complexionall, it is in their nature then to believe them, and this is helped forward very much by the advantage of love and veneration which we have to the firſt parents of our perſwaſions. And we ſee it in the orders of Regulars in the Church of *Rome*. That opinion which was the opinion of their Patron or Founder, or of ſome eminent Perſonage of the Inſtitute, is enough to engage all the Order to be of that opinion; and it is ſtrange that all the Dominicans ſhould be of one opinion in the matter of Pre-termination

termination and immaculate conception, and all the Franciscans of the quite contrary, as if their understandings were form'd in a different mold, and furnished with various principles by their very rule. Now this prejudice works by many principles, but how strongly they do possess the understanding is visible in that great instance of the affection and perfect perswasion the weaker sort of people have to that which they call the Religion of their Forefathers. You may as well charm a seaver asleep with the noise of bells, as make any pretence of reason against that Religion which old men have intayl'd upon their heirs male so many generations till they can prescribe. And the Apostles found this to be most true in the extremest difficulty they met with, to contest against the rites of *Moses*, and the long superstition of the Gentiles, which they therefore thought fit to be retain'd, because they had done so formerly, *Pergentes non quo evadendum est, sed quo itur*, and all the blessings of this life which God gave them, they had in conjunction with their Religion, and therefore they beleev'd it was for their Religion, and this perswasion was bound fast in them with ribs of iron, the Apostles were forc'd to unloose the whole conjuncture of parts & principles in their understandings, before they could make them malleable and receptive of any impressions. But the observation and experience of all wise men can justify this truth. All that I shall say to the present purpose, is this, that consideration is to be had to the weakness of persons when they are prevail'd upon by so innocent a prejudice, and when there cannot be arguments strong enough to over-master an habituall perswasion bred with a man, nourish'd up with him, that alwayes eat at his table, and lay in his bosome, he is not easily to be called Heretique, for if he keeps the foundation of faith, other articles are not so cleerly demonstrated on either side, but that a man may innocently be abused to the contrary. And therefore in this case to handle him charitably, is but to doe him justice: And when an opinion *in minoribus articulis*, is entertain'd upon the title and stock of education, it may be the better permitted to him, since upon no better stock nor stronger arguments, most men entertain their whole Religion, even Christianity it selfe.

*Optimaria ea
que magno
sensu, recepta
sunt, quoniam
exempla magis
sunt, nec ad
rationem, sed ad
similitudinem
vultus. S. u.
Vid. Minut.
Fel. octav.*

5. There are some persons of a differing perswasion, who there

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Numb. 5.

fore are the rather to be tolerated, because the indirect practices and impostures of their adversaries have confirmed them; that those opinions which they disavow, are not from God, as being upheld by means not of Gods appointment: For it is no unreasonable discourse to say, that God will not be served with a lye, for he does not need one, and he hath means enough to support all those truths which he hath commanded, and hath supplied every honest cause with enough for its maintenance, and to contest against its adversaries. And (but that they which use indirect arts will not be willing to lose any of their unjust advantages, nor yet be charitable to those persons, whom either to gain or to undoe, they leave nothing unattempted) the Church of *Rome* hath much reason not to be so decretory in her sentences against persons of a differing perswasion, for if their cause were entirely the cause of God, they have given wise people reason to suspect it, because some of them have gone to the Devill to defend it. And if it be remembred what tragedies were stirred up against *Luther*, for saying, the Devill had taught him an argument against the Mass, it will be of as great advantage against them, that they goe to the Devill for many arguments to support not onely the Mass, but the other distinguishing Articles of their Church: I instance in the notorious forging of Miracles, and framing of false and ridiculous Legends. For the former I need no other instances then what hapned in the great contestation about the immaculate conception, when there were Miracles brought on both sides to prove the contradictory parts; and though it be more then probable that both sides play'd the jugglers, yet the Dominicans had the ill luck to be discovered, and the actors burn'd at *Berne*. But this discovery hapned by providence; for the Dominican opinion hath more degrees of probability then the Franciscan; is cleerly more consonant both to Scripture and all antiquity, and this part of it is acknowledged by the greatest Patrons themselves, as *Salmcron*, *Pesà* and *Wadding*, yet because they played the knaves in a just question, and used false arts to maintain a true proposition, God Almighty to shew that he will not be served by a lye, was pleased rather to discover the imposture in the right opinion then in the false, since nothing is more dishonourable to God, then to offer a sin in sacrifice to him, and nothing more incongru-

congruous in the nature of the thing, then that truth and falſhood ſhould ſupport each other, or that true doctrine ſhould live at the charges of a lye. And he that conſiders the arguments for each opinion will eaſily conclude, that if God would not have truth confirmed by a lye, much leſſe would he himſelf attelt a lye with a true miracle. And by this ground it will eaſily follow, that the Franciſcan party, although they had better luck then the Dominicans, yet had not more honeſty, becauſe their cauſe was worſe, and therefore their arguments no whit the better. And although the argument drawn from miracles is good to attelt a holy doctrine, which by its own worth will ſupport it ſelfe, after way is a little made by miracles, yet of it ſelfe and by its owne reputation it will not ſupport any fabrick; for inſtead of proving a doctrine to be true, it makes that the miracles themſelves are ſuſpected to be illuſions, if they be pretended in behalfe of a doctrine, which we think we have reaſon to account falſe. And therefore the Jews did not beleeeve Chriſts doctrine for his Miracles, but diſ-beleeeved the truth of his Miracles, becauſe they did not like his doctrine. And if the holineſſe of his doctrine, and the Spirit of God by inſpirations and inſuſions, and by that which Saint Peter calls a *ſurer word of prophecy*, had not attelted the Divinity both of his Perſon and his Office, we ſhould have wanted many degrees of confidence which now we have upon the truth of Chriſtian Religion. But now ſince we are fore-told by this *ſurer word of prophecy*, that is, the prediction of Jeſus Chriſt, that Antichriſt ſhould come in all wonders, and ſigns, and lying miracles, and that the Church ſaw much of that already verified in *Simon Magus*, *Apollonius Tyaneus*, and *Manetho*, and divers * Heretiques, it is now come to that paſſe, that the argument in its beſt advantage proves nothing ſo much as that the doctrine which it pretends to prove, is to be ſuſpected, becauſe it was foretold that falſe doctrine ſhould be obtruded under ſuch pretences. But then when not onely true miracles are an inſufficient argument to prove a truth ſince the eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity, but that the miracles themſelves are falſe and ſpurious, it makes that doctrine in whoſe defence they come, juſtly to be ſuſpected, becauſe they are a demonſtration that the intereſted perſons uſe all means, leave nothing unattempted to prove their propoſitions,

Vid. Baron. c. 8.
D. 68. n. 22.
Philoſtrat. l. 4.
T. 485. com-
pend. Cedren.
p. 203.
* Scapleton.
prompt. Moral.
pars xſtiua, p.
627.

ons; but ſince they ſo faile as to bring nothing from God, but ſomething from the Devill for its juſtification, it's a great ſigne that the doctrine is falſe, becauſe we know the Devill, unleſſe it be againſt his will, does nothing to prove a true propoſition that makes againſt him. And now then thoſe perſons who will endure no man of another opinion, might doe well to remember how by their exorcifms, their Devils tricks at *London*, and the other ſide pretending to cure mad folkes and perſons bewitched, and the many discoveries of their juggling they have given ſo much reaſon to their adverſaries to ſuſpect their doctrine, that either they muſt not be ready to condemne their perſons who are made ſuſpicious by their indirec[t] proceeding in attestation of that which they value ſo high as to call their Religion, or elſe they muſt condemne themſelves for making the ſcandall active and effectuall.

Numb. 4.

As for falſe Legends, it will be of the ſame conſideration, becauſe they are falſe Teſtimonies of Miracles that were never done, which differs onely from the other as a lye in words from a lye in action, but of this we have witneſs enough in that decree of Pope *Leo X.* ſeſſion the eleventh, of the laſt Lateran Councell, where he excommunicates all the forgers and inventors of viſions and falſe Miracles, which is a teſtimony that it was then a practice ſo publicke as to need a Law for its ſuppreſſion; and if any man ſhall doubt whether it were ſo or not, let him ſee the *Cenſum gravamina* of the Princes of *Germany* where it is highly complain'd of. But the extreme ſtupidity and ſottiſhneſs of the inventors of lying ſtorieſ is ſo great, as to give occaſion to ſome perſons to ſuſpect the truth of all Church ſtorieſ, witneſs the Legend of *Lombardy*: of the author of which the Biſhop of the *Canaries* gives this Teſtimony, *In illo enim libro miraculorum monſtrapius quam vera miracula legas. Hunc homo ſcripſit ferrei oris, plumbei cordis, animi certe porum ſeveri & prudentis.* But I need not deſcend ſo low, for Saint *Gregory* and *V. Bede* themſelves reported miracles, for the authority of which they only had the report of the common people, and it is not certaine that *S. Hierome* had ſo much in his ſtorieſ of *S. Paul* and *S. Anthony*, and the *Fauns* and the *Satyrs* which appear'd to them, and deſir'd their Prayers. But I ſhall onely by way of eminency, note what Sir

Thomas

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Vid L. 11. loc.
Theol. cap. 6.

Canus ibi.

Thomas More ſayes in his *Epistle to Ruthal* the Kings Secretary before the Dialogue of *Lucian* [*Philopseudes*] that therefore he undertook the translation of that dialogue, to free the world from a superstition that crept in under the face and title of Religion. For such lyes (ſayes he) are transmitted to us with ſuch authority that a certaine impostor had perswaded *S. Austin*, that the very fable which *Lucian* scoffes, makes sport withall in that *Dialogue was a reall story, and acted in his owne dayes. The Epistle is worth the reading to this purpose; but he ſayes this abuse grew to such a height, that scarce any life of any Saint or Martyr is truly related, but is full of lyes and lying wonders, and some persons thought they served God if they did honour to God's Saints by inventing some prodigious story, or miracle for their reputation. So that now it is no wonder if the most pious men are apt to believe, and the greatest historians are easie enough to report such stories, which serving to a good end, are also consigned by the report of persons, otherwise pious and prudent enough. I will not instance in *Vincentius* his *speculum, Turonensis*, *Thomas Cantimpratus*, *John Herolt*, *Vita Patrum*, nor the revelations of Saint *Briget* though confirmed by two Popes, *Martin V.* and *Boniface IX.* even the best and most deliberate amongst them, *Lippoman*, *Sirius*, *Lipsius Bzovius*, and *Baronius* are so full of fables that they cause great disreputation to the other Monuments and records of antiquity, and yet doe no advantage to the cause under which they serve and take pay. They doe no good and much hurt; but yet accidentally they may procure this advantage to charity, since they doe none to faith; that since they have so abused the credit of story that our confidences want much of that support we should receive from her records of antiquity, yet the men that dissent and are scandaliz'd by such proceedings should be excused if they should chance to be afraid of truth that hath put on garments of imposture: and since much violence is done to the truth & certainty of their judging, let none be done to their liberty of judging: since they cannot meet a right guide, let them have a charitable judge. And since it is one very great argument against *Simon Magus* and against *Mahomet* that we can prove their miracles to be impostures, it is much to be pittied if timorous and suspicious persons shall invincibly and honestly

* Viz. De duobus spiritis, altero decedente, altero in vitam redeunte post viginti dies; quam in alia nominibus ridet Lucianus. Vid. etiam argumentum Gilberti Cognati, in Annat. in hunc Dia'.

Vid. Palaeot. de sacra sindone, part. 1. Epist. ad Lector.

leſſe apprehend a truth which they ſee conveyed by ſuch a teſtimony which we all uſe as an argument to reprove the Mahumetan ſuperſtition.

Numb. 7.

6. Here alſo comes in all the weakneſſes and trifling prejudices which operate not by their own ſtrength, but by advantage taken from the weakneſſe of ſome underſtandings. Some men by a Proverb or a common ſaying are determin'd to the belief of a propoſition, for which they have no argument better then ſuch a Proverbiall ſentence. And when divers of the common People in *Jeruſalem* were ready to yeild their underſtandings to the belief of the Meſſias, they were turn'd cleerly from their apprehenſions by that proverb, *looke and ſee, does any good thing come from Galilee?* And this, *when Chriſt comes, no man knowes from whence he is*; but this man was knowne of what parents, of what City. And thus the weakneſſe of their underſtanding was abuſed, and that made the argument too hard for them. And the whole ſeventh Chapter of Saint *Johns* Goſpell is a perpetuall inſtance of the efficacy of ſuch trifling prejudices, and the vanity and weakneſſe of popular underſtandings. Some whole ages have beene abuſed by a definition, which being once received, as moſt commonly they are upon ſlight grounds, they are taken for certainties in any ſcience reſpectively, and for principles, and upon their reputation men uſe to frame concluſions, which muſt be falſe or uncertaine according as the definitions are. And he that hath obſerv'd anything of the weakneſſes of men, and the ſucceſſions of groundleſſe doctrines from age to age, and how ſeldome definitions which are put into ſyſtemes, or that derive from the Fathers, or approved among Schooll-men are examined by perſons of the ſame intereſts, will beare me witneſſe, how many and great inconveniences preſſe hard upon the perſwaſions of men, who are abuſed and yet never conſider who hurt them. Others, and they very many, are lead by authority or examples of Princes, & great perſonages, *Numquid credit ex Principibus?* Some by the reputation of one learned man are carryed into any perſwaſion whatſoever. And in the middle and latter ages of the Church, this was the more conſiderable, becauſe the infinite ignorance of the Clerks, and the men of the long robe gave them over to be lead by thoſe few guides which were mark'd to them by an eminency,

much

Joh. 7.

much more then their ordinary : which alſo did the more abuſe them, becauſe moſt commonly they were fit for nothing but to admire what they underſtood not ; their learning then was in ſome ſkill in the Maſter of the Sentences, in *Aquinas* or *Scotus* whom they admir'd next to the moſt intelligent order of Angels ; hence came opinions that made Sects & diviſion of names, Thomiſts, Scotiſts, Albertiſts, Nominalls, Realls, and I know not what monſters of names ; and whole families of the ſame opinion, the whole inſtitute of an Order being ingag'd to believe according to the opinion of ſome leading man of the ſame Order, as if ſuch an opinion were impoſed upon them in *virtute ſanctæ obedienciæ*. But this inconvenience is greater when the principle of the miſtake runs higher, when the opinion is deriv'd from a Primitive man and a Saint, for then it often happens that what at firſt was but a plain innocent ſeduction, comes to be made ſacred by the veneration which is conſequent to the perſon for having lived long ago ; and then, becauſe the perſon is alſo ſince canoniz'd, the error is almoſt made eternal, and the cure deſperate. Theſe and the like prejudices which are as various as the miſeries of humanity or the variety of humane underſtandings are not abſolute excuſes, unleſſe to ſome perſons, but truly if they be to any, they are exemptions to all, from being preſſed with too peremptory a ſentence againſt them, eſpecially if we conſider what leave is given to all men by the church of *Rome* to follow any one probable Doctor in an opinion which is conteſted againſt by many more. And as for the Doctors of the other ſide, they being deſtitute of any pretences to an infallible *medium* to determine queſtions, muſt of neceſſity allow the ſame liberty to the people, to be as prudent as they can in the choice of a fallible guide ; and when they have choſen, if they doe follow him into error, the matter is not ſo inexcusable for being deceiv'd in uſing the beſt guides we had, which guides becauſe themſelves were abuſed, did alſo againſt their wills deceive me. So that this prejudice may the eaſier abuſe us, becauſe it is almoſt like a duty to follow the dictates of a probable Doctor, or if it be over-acted or accidentally paſſe into an inconvenience, it is therefore to be excuſed becauſe the principle was not ill, unleſſe we judge by our event, not by the antecedent probability. Of ſuch men as theſe it was ſaid

Contr. Fund.

c 4.

Orat. 21.

said by Saint *Austin*, *Ceteram turbam non intelligendi vivacitas, sed credendi simplicitas tutissimam facit.* And *Gregory Nazianzen*, *οἷς ἐκ πολλοῦ τὸ λαβεῖν τὸ ἀκατάσκευ.* The common sort of people are safe in their not inquiring by their owne industry, and in the simplicity of their understanding relying upon the best guides they can get.

Numb. 6.

But this is of such a nature in which as we may inculpably be deceived, so we may turne it into a vice or a designe, and then the consequent errors will alter the property, and become heresies. There are some men that have mens persons in admiration because of advantage, and some that have itching eares, and heap up teachers to themselves. In these and the like cases the authority of a person, and the prejudices of a great reputation is not the excuse but the fault: And a sinne is so farre from excusing an Errour, that Errour becomes a sinne by reason of it's relation to that sinne as to it's parent and principle.

SECT. XII.

Of the innocency of Error in opinion in a pious person.

Numb. 1.

AND therefore as there are so many innocent causes of Error, as there are weakneses within, and harmlesse and unavoydable prejudices from without, so if ever error be procured by a vice it hath no excuse, but becomes such a crime, of so much malignity, as to have influence upon the effect and consequent, and by communication makes it become criminall. The Apostles noted two such causes: *Covetousnes* & *Ambition*, the former in them of the Circumcision, and the latter in *Diotrephes* and *Simon Magus*; and there were some that were ἀγαστοι ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐν γῇ they were of the long robe too, but they were the she-Disciples, upon whose Consciences some false Apostles had influence by advantage of their wantonnes, and thus the three principles of all sinne become also the principles of heresie, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. And in pursuance of these arts the Devill hath not wanted fuell to set aworke incendiaries

2 Tim. 3.

diaries in all ages of the church. The Bishops were alwayes ^{honor} honourable, and most commonly had great revenues, and a Bishoprick would satisfie the two designs of Covetousnesse and Ambition, and this hath been the golden apple very often contended for, and very often the cause of great fires in the Church. *Thebulis quia rejectus ab Episcopo Hierosolymitano, turbare cepit Ecclesiam*, said *Egesippus* in *Eusebius*. *Tertullian* turn'd Montanist in discontent for missing the Bishoprick of *Carthage* after *Agrippinus*, and so did *Montanus* himselfe for the same discontent, saith *Nicephorus*. *Novatus* would have been Bishop of *Rome*, *Donatus* of *Carthage*, *Arrius* of *Alexandria*, *Aerius* of *Sebastia*, but they all missed, and therefore all of them vexed Christendome. And this was so common a thing, that oftentimes, the threatening the Church with a schisme, or a heresie, was a design to get a Bishoprick: And *Socrates* reports of *Asterius*, that he did frequent the Conventicles of the *Arrians*; *Nam Episcopatum ille quem amabat*. And setting aside the infirmities of men, and their innocent prejudices; *Epiphanius* makes pride to be the onely cause of heresies, *ὁ ὅτις ἐξ ὀψιμότητος*, Pride and Prejudice cause them all, the one criminally, the other innocently. And indeed *S. Paul* does almost make pride the onely cause of heresies, his words cannot be expounded, unlesse it be at least the principall, *ἡ περὶ ἐκδοξασίας*, and consents not to sound words, and the doctrine that is according to godlinesse, *ἐν ἡρώδῃ καὶ ἐν Ἰσκαριώτῃ, ἀλλὰ νοοῦντες τὴν ἑλπίδα καὶ τὸν λόγον καὶ τὴν ἐξ ὧν γίνονται φόβοι, δεῖτε, βλασφημίας, ὑβρισμῶν τοιούτων*.

The summe is this, If ever an opinion be begun with pride, or manag'd with impiety, or ends in a crime; the man turns Heretique: but let the error be never so great, so it be not against an Article of Creed, if it be simple and hath no confederation with the personall iniquity of the man, the opinion is as innocent as the person, though perhaps as false as he is ignorant, and therefore shall burne though he himselfe escape. But in these cases and many more, (for the causes of deception increase by all accidents, and weaknesses, and illusions) no man can give certaine judgement upon the persons of men in particular, unlesse the matter of fact and crime be accident and notorious. The man cannot by humane judgement be concluded a heretique, unlesse his opinion be an open recession from plaine demonstrative divine authority

Numb. 2.

(which must needs be notorious, voluntary, visible and criminal) or that there be a palpable serving of an end accidentall and extrinsecall to the opinion.

Numb. 3.

But this latter is very hard to be discerned, because those accidentall and adherent crimes which makes the man a heretique, in questions not simply fundametall or of necessary practice, are actions so internall and spirituall, that cognizance can but seldom be taken of them. And therefore to instance though the opinion of Purgatory be false, yet to bekeve it cannot be heresie, if a man be abused into the beliefe of it invincibly, because it is not a Doctrine either fundamentally false or practically impious, it neither proceeds from the will, nor hath any immediate or direct influence upon choice and manners. And as for those other ends of upholding that opinion which possibly its Patrons may have, as for the reputation of their Churches infallibility, for the advantage of Derges, Requiemss, Masses, Monthly minds, Anniversaries, and other offices for the dead, which usually are very profitable, rich and easie, these things may possibly have sole influences upon their understanding but whether they have or no God only knowes. If the proposition and article were true, these ends might justly be subordinate and consistent with a true proposition. And there are some truths that are also profitable, as the necessity of maintenance to the Clergy, the Doctrine of restitution, giving Almes, lending freely, remitting debts in cases of great necessity: and it would be but an ill argument that the preachers of these doctrines speake false, because possibly in these articles they may serve their owne ends. For although *Demerius*, and the Crafts-men were without excuse for resisting the Preaching of *S. Paul*, because it was notorious they resisted the truth upon ground of profit and personall emoluments, and the matter was confessed by themselves, yet if the Clergie should maintaine their just rites and Revenues which by pious dedications and donatives were long since ascertained upon them, is it to be presumed in order of Law and charity, that this end is in the men subordinate to truth, because it is so in the thing it selfe, and that therefore no judgement in prejudice of these truths can be made from that observation?

But

But if *aliunde* we are ascertain'd of the truth or falshood of a proposition respectively, yet the judgement of the personall ends of the men, cannot ordinarily be certaine and judiciall, because most commonly the acts are private, and the purposes internall, and temporall ends may sometimes consist with truth, and whether the purposes of the men make these ends principall or subordinate, no man can judge; and be they how they will, yet they do not alwayes prove that when they are conjunct with error, that the error was caused by these purposes and criminall intentions.

Numb. 4.

But in questions practically, the doctrine it selfe and the person too, may with more ease be reproved, because matter of fact being evident, and nothing being so certaine as the experiments of humane affaires, and these being the immediate consequents of such doctrines, are with some more certainty of observation redargued, then the speculative; whose judgement is of it self more difficult, more remote from matter and humane observation, and with lesse curiosity and explicitnesse declared in Scripture as being of lesse consequence and concernment in order to Gods and Man's great end. In other things which end in notion and ineffective contemplation, where neither the doctrine is malicious, nor the person apparently criminall, he is to be left to the judgement of God, and as there is no certainty of humane judicature in this case, so it is to no purpose it should be judged. For if the person may be innocent with his Error, and there is no rule whereby he can certainly be pronounced, that he is actually criminall; (as it happens in matters speculative.) Since the end of the Commandment is love out of a pure conscience, and faith unstained; and the Commandment may obtaine its end in a consistence with this simple speculative Errour, Why should men trouble themselves with such opinions, so as to disturbe the publicke charity or the private confidence? Opinions and persons are just so to be judged as other matters and persons criminall. For no man can judge any thing else: it must be a crime; and it must be open, so as to take cognizance, and make true humane judgement of it. And this is all I am to say concerning the causes of heresies, and of the distinguishing rules for guiding of our judgments towards others.

Numb. 5.

Numb. 6.

As for guiding our judgements and the use of our reason in judging for our selves, all that is to be said is reducible to this one proposition. Since errors are then made sinnes when they are contrary to charity or inconsistent with a good life and the honour of God, that judgement is the truest, or at least that opinion most innocent that 1. best promotes the reputation of Gods Glory, and 2. is the best instrument of holy life. For in questions and interpretations of dispute, these two analogies are the best to make propositions, & conjectures and determinations. Diligence and care in obtaining the best guides, and the most convenient assistances, prayer, and modesty of spirit, simplicity of purposes and intentions, humility and aptnesse to learn, & a peaceable disposition, are therefore necessary to finding out truths, because they are parts of good life, without which our truths will doe us little advantage, and our errors can have no excuse, but with these dispositions as he is sure to find out all that is necessary, so what truth he inculpably misses of, he is sure is therefore not necessary, because he could not finde it when he did his best and his most innocent endeavours. And this I say to secure the persons; because no rule can antecedently secure the proposition in matters disputable. For even in the proportions and explications of this rule there is infinite variety of disputes: And when the dispute is concerning free will, one partie denyes it because he beleeves it magnifies the grace of God, that it workes irresistably; the other affirms, because he beleeves it engages us upon greater care and piety of our endeavours. The one opinion thinks God reapes the glory of our good actions, the other thinks it charges our bad actions upon him. So in the question of merit, one part chooseth his assertion because he thinks it encourages us to doe good works, the other beleeves it makes us proud, and therefore he rejects it. The first beleeves it increases piety, the second beleeves it increases spirituall presumption and vanity. The first thinks it magnifies Gods justice, the other thinks it derogates from his mercy. Now then, since neither this nor any ground can secure a man from possibility of mistaking, we were infinitely miserable if it would not secure us from punishment, so long as we willingly consent not to a crime, and doe our best endeavour to avoid an error. Onely by the way, let me observe,

that

that since there are such great differences of apprehension concerning the consequents of an article, no man is to be charged with the odious consequences of his opinion. Indeed his doctrine is, but the person is not, if he understands not such things to be consequent to his Doctrine; for if he did, and then avows them, they are his direct opinions, & he stands as chargeable with them as with his first propositions; but if he dis-avows them, he would certainly rather quit his opinion than avow such errors or impieties, which are pretended to be consequent to it, because every man knows that can be no truth, from whence falsehood naturally and immediately does derive, and he therefore beleeves his first proposition, because he beleeves it innocent of such errors as are charg'd upon it directly or consequently.

So that now, since no error neither for its selfe nor its consequents is to be charg'd as criminall upon a pious person, since no simple error is a sin, nor does condemne us before the throne of God, since he is so pittifull to our crimes, that he pardons many *de toto & integro*, in all makes abatement for the violence of temptation, and the surprizall and invasion of our faculties, and therefore much lesse will demand of us an account for our weaknesses; and since the strongest understanding cannot pretend to such an immunity and exemption from the condition of men, as not to be deceived and confesse its weaknesse; it remains we inquire what deportment is to be used towards persons of a differing perswasion, when we are (I doe not say doubtfull of a proposition, but) convinc'd that he that differs from us is in Error, for this was the first intention, and the last end of this discourse.

Numb. 7.

SECT. XIII.

Of the deportment to be used towards persons disagreeing, and the reasons why they are not to be punished with death, &c.

FOr although every man may be deceived, yet some are right and may know it too, for every man that may erre, does not therefore certainly erre, and if he erre because he recedes from his rule, then if he followes it he may doe right, and if ever

Numb. 1.

any man upon just grounds did change his opinion, then he was in the right and was sure of it too, and although confidence is mistaken for a just persuasion many times, yet some men are confident, and have reason so to be. Now when this happens, the question is what deportment they are to use towards persons that disagree from them, and by consequence are in error.

Numb. 2.

1. Then no Christian is to be put to death, dismembered, or otherwise directly persecuted for his opinion, which does not teach impiety or blasphemy. If it plainly and apparently brings in a crime, and himselfe does act it or encourage it, then the matter of fact is punishable according to its proportion or malignity; as if he preaches treason or sedition, his opinion is not his excuse, because it brings in a crime, and a man is never the lesse traitor, because he beleeves it lawful to commit treason; &c. a man is a murdurer if he kills his brother unjustly, although he thinks he does God good service in it. Matters of fact are equally judicable whether the principle of them be from within or from without: And if a man could pretend to innocence in being seditious, blasphemous, or perjur'd by perswading himself it is lawfull, there were as great a gate opened to all iniquity, as will entertaine all the pretences, the designs, the impostures, and disguises of the world. And therefore God hath taken order that all rules concerning matters of fact and good life shall be so cleerely explicated, that without the crime of the man, he cannot be ignorant of all his practicall duty. And therefore the Apostles and primitive Doctors made no scruple of condemning such persons for hereticks, that did dogmatize a sinne. He that teaches others to sinne, is worse then he that commits the crime, whether he be tempted by his owne interest, or encouraged by the others doctrine. It was, as bad in *Basiliides* to teach it to be lawfull to renounce Faich and Religion, and take all manner of Oathes and Covenants in time of persecution, as if himselfe had done so; nay it is as much worse, as the mischeife is more universall, or as a fountaine is greater then a drop of water taken from it. He that writes Treason in a booke, or preaches Sedition in a Pulpit, and perswades it to the people, is the greatest Traitor and incendiary, and his opinion there is the fountaine of a sinne, and therefore could not be entertain'd in his understanding upon

upon weakneſſe, or inculpable or innocent prejudice; he cannot from Scripture or divine revelation have any pretence to colour that ſo fairely as to ſeduce either a wiſe or an honeſt man. If it reſt there and goes no further, it is not cognoſcible, and ſo ſcapes that way; but if it be publiſhed and comes à ſtylo ad Mucheraps (as *Tertullians* phraſe is) then it becomes matter of fact in principle and in perſwaſion, and is juſt ſo puniſhable, as is the crime that it perſwades: ſuch were they of whom *S. Paul* complains, who brought in damnable doctrines and luſts. *S. Pauls Gal. 5.* *Utinam abſcindatur* is juſt of them, take it in any ſenſe of rigour and ſeverity, ſo it be proportionable to the crime, or criminall doctrine. Such were thoſe of whom God ſpoke in *Deut. 13.* If any Prophet tempts to idolatry, ſaying, let us goe after other Gods, he ſhall be ſlaine. But theſe doe not come into this queſtion. But the propoſition is to be underſtood concerning queſtions diſputable in *materia intellectuall*; which alſo for all that law of killing, ſuch falſe Prophets were permitted with impunity in the Synagogue, as appeares beyond exception in the great divisions and diſputes betweene the Phariſees and the Sadducees. I deny not but certaine and knowne idolatry or any other ſort of practical impiety with its principall doctrine may be puniſhed corporally, becauſe it is no other but matter of fact, but no matter of mere opinion, no errors that of themſelves are not ſins are to be persecuted or puniſhed by death or corporall inflictions. This is now to be proved.

2. All the former diſcourſe is ſufficient argument how eaſie it is for us in ſuch matters to be deceived. So long as Chriſtian Religion was a ſimple profeſſion of the articles of beleeſe, and a hearty proſecution of the rules of good life, the ſewneſſe of the articles and the clearneſſe of the rule, was cauſe of the ſeldome prevarication. But when divinity is ſwell'd up to ſo great a body, when the ſeverall queſtions which the peeviſhneſſe and wantonneſſe of ſixteene ages have commenc'd, are concentred into one, and from all theſe queſtions ſomething is drawne into the body of *Theologie* till it hath aſcended up to the greatneſſe of a mountaine, and the ſumme of Divinity collected by *Aquinas*, makes a volume as great as was that of *Livy* mock'd at in the *Epigramme*.

Quem mea vix totum bibliotheca capit.

It is impossible for any industry to consider so many particulars in the infinite numbers of questions as are necessary to be consider'd before we can with certainty determine any. And after all the considerations which we can have in a whole age, we are not sure *not to be deceived*. The obscurity of some questions, the nicety of some articles, the intricacy of some revelations, the variety of humane understandings, the windings of *Logicke*, the tricks of adversaries, the subtilty of Sophisters, the engagement of educations, personall affections, the portentous number of writers, the infinity of authorities, the vastnesse of some arguments, as consisting in enumeration of many particulars, the uncertainty of others, the severall degrees of probability, the difficulties of Scripture, the invalidity of probation of tradition, the opposition of all exteriour arguments to each other, and their open contestation, the publicke violence done to authors and records, the private arts and supplantings, the falsifyings, the indefatigable industry of some men to abuse all understandings, and all persuasions into their owne opinions, these and thousands more, even all the difficulty of things, and all the weaknesses of man & all the arts of the Devill, have made it impossible for any man in so great variety of matter not to be deceived. No man pretends to it but the Pope, and no man is more deceived then he is in that very particular.

Numb. 4.

3. From hence proceeds a danger which is consequent to this proceeding, for if we, who are so apt to be deceived, & so insecure in our resolution of questions disputable, should persecute a dis-agreeing person, we are not sure we doe not fight against God, for if his proposition be true and persecuted, then, because all truth derives from God, this proceeding is against God, and therefore this is not to be done upon *Gamaliel's* ground, lest peradventure we be found to fight against God, of which because we can have no security (at least) in this case, we have all the guilt of a doubtfull or an uncertaine Conscience. For if there be no security in the thing as I have largely proved, the Conscience in such cases is as uncertaine as the question is, and if it be not doubtfull where it is uncertaine, it is because the man is not wise, but as confident as ignorant, the first without reason, and the second with-

without excuse. And it is very disproportionable for a man to persecute another certainly, for a proposition, that if he were wise, he would know is not certaine, at least, the other person may innocently be uncertaine of it. If he be kill'd, he is certainly kill'd, but if he be call'd hereticke, it is not so certaine that he is an hereticke. It were good therefore, that proceedings were according to evidence, and the rivers not swell over the banks, nor a certaine definitive sentence of death pass'd upon such perswasions which cannot certainly be defin'd. And this argument is of so much the more force, because we see that the greatest persecutions that ever have been, were against truth, even against Christianity it selfe, and it was a prediction of our blessed Saviour, that persecution should be the lot of true beleivers: and if we compute the experience of suffering Christendome, and the prediction, that truth should suffer, with those few instances of suffering hereticks, it is odds, but persecution is on the wrong side, and that it is error and heresie, that is, cruell and tyrannicall, especially since the truth of Jesus Christ, and of his Religion are so meeke, so charitable, and so mercifull: and we may in this case, exactly use the words of S. Paul, *But as then, he that was borne after the flesh, persecuted him that was borne after the spirit; even so it is now: and so it ever will be till Christs second coming.*

4. Whoever persecutes a disagreeing person, armes all the world against himselfe, and all pious people of his owne perswasion, when the scales of authority return to his adversary, and attest his contradictory; and then, what can he urge for mercy for himselfe, or his party that sheweth none to others? If he sayes, that he is to be spared because he beleeveth true, but the other was justly persecuted because he was in error, he is ridiculous. For he is as confidently beleev'd to be a hereticke, as he beleeveth his adversary such, and whether he be or no, being the thing in question, of this he is not to be his owne judge, but he that hath authority on his side, will be sure to judge against him. So that, what either side can indifferently make use of, it is good that neither would, because neither side can with reason sufficient doe it in prejudice of the other. If a man will say, that every man must take his adventure, and if it happens authority to be with

Numb. 5.

*Quo comperto
isti in nostram
perniciem licen-
tior audacia
grasabuntur.
S. Aug. epist. ad
Donat. Pro-
conf. & Contr.
ep. Fund. ita
nunc debeo su-
stinere & tan-
ta patientia
vobiscum agere
quantam mecum
egerunt proximi
mei cum in
vestro dogmate
rabiosus ac ce-
cus errarem.*

him, he will perſecute his adverſaries, and if it turnes againſt him he will bear it as well as he can, and hope for a reward of Martyrdom, and innocent ſuffering; beſides that this is ſo equall to be ſaid of all ſides, and beſides, that this is a way to make an eternall diſunion of hearts and charities, and that it will make Chriſtendome nothing but a ſhambles, and a perpetuall butchery, and as faſt as mens wits grow wanton, or confident, or proud, or abuſed, ſo often there will be new executions and maſſacres. Beſides all this, it is moſt unreaſonable and unjuſt, as being contrariant to thoſe Lawes of Juſtice and Charity, whereby we are bound with greater zeale to ſpare and preſerve an innocent, then to condemne a guilty perſon, and there's leſſe malice and iniquity in ſparing the guilty, then in condemning the good. Be-
 cauſe it is in the power of men to remit a guilty perſon to divine judicature, and for divers cauſes, not to uſe ſeverity, but in no caſe is it lawfull, neither hath God at all given to man a power to condemne ſuch perſons as cannot be proved other than pious and innocent. And therefore it is better, if it ſhould ſo happen, that we ſhould ſpare the innocent perſon, and one that is actually deceiv'd, then that upon the turn of the wheele, the true believers ſhould be deſtroyed.

Numb. 6.

And this very reaſon, he that had authority ſufficient, and abſolute to make Lawes, was pleaſed to urge as a reaſonable inducement for the eſta bliſhing of that Law which he made for the indemnity of erring perſons. It was in the parable of the tares mingled with the good ſeed in *Agro dominico* the good ſeed (Chriſt himſelfe being the interpreter) are the Children of the Kingdom, the tares are the children of the wicked one, upon this comes the precept, *gather not the tares by themſelves, but let them both grow together till the harveſt*, that is, till the day of Judgement. This Parable hath been tortur'd infinitely to make it confeſſe its meaning, but we ſhall ſoone diſpatch it. All the difficulty and variety of expoſition is reducible to theſe two queſtions, What is meant by [*Gather not,*] and what by [*Tares.*] That is, what kind of ſword is forbidden, and what kind of perſons are to be tolerated. The former is cleare; for the ſpirituall ſword is not forbidden to be uſed to any ſort of criminals, for that would deſtroy the power of excommunication. The prohibition there-

therefore lyes against the use of the temporall sword, in cutting off some persons. Who they are, is the next difficulty. But by *tares*, or the *children of the wicked one*, are meant either persons of ill lives, wicked persons onely *in re practica*, or else another kind of evill persons, men criminall or faulty *in re intellectuall*. One or other of these two must be meant; a third I know not. But the former cannot be meant, because it would destroy all bodies politique, which cannot consist without lawes, nor lawes without a compulsory and a power of the sword, therefore if criminalls were to be let alone till the day of Judgement, bodies politique must stand or fall *ad arbitrium impiorum*, and nothing good could be protected, not Innocence it selfe, nothing could be secure but violence and tyrannie. It followes then that since a kind of persons which are indeed faulty are to be tolerated, it must be meant of persons faulty in another kind, in which the Gospell had not in other places cleerely established a power externally compulsory, and therefore since in all actions practically criminall a power of the sword is permitted, here where it is denyed must meane a crime of another kind, and by consequence errors intellectuall, commonly call'd heresie.

And after all this the reason there given confirms this * interpretation, for therefore it is forbidden to cut off these tares, lest we also pull up the wheat with them, which is the summe of these two last arguments. For because Heresie is of so nice consideration, and difficult sentence, in thinking to root up heresies, we may by our * mistakes destroy true doctrine, which although it be possible to be done in all cases of practicall question, by mistake, yet because externall actions are more discernable then inward speculations and opinions, innocent persons are not so easily mistaken for the guilty, in actions criminall, as in matters of inward perswasion. And upon that very reason Saint Martin was zealous to have procured a revocation of a Commission granted to certaine Tribunes to make enquiry in Spaine for sects and opinions; for under colour of rooting out the Priscilianists, there was much mischief done, and more likely to happen to the Orthodox. For it happened then, as oftentimes since, *Pallore potius & veste quam fide hereticus dyndicari solebat aliquando per Tribunos Maximi*. They were no good inquisi-

Numb. 7.

* Vide S. Chrysost. homil. 47.

in Cap. 13.

Math. et. S.

August.

Quest. in cap.

13. Mar. S. Cy-

prian. Ep. lib. 3

Ep. 1.

Theophyl. in

13. Marth.

* S. Hieron. in

cap 13. Matth.

ait, per hanc

parabolam sig-

nificari, ne in

rebus dubiis

præceptis fiat

judicium.

tors of hereticall pravity, so *Sulpitius* witnesses. But secondly, the reason sayes, that therefore these persons are so to be permitted as not to be persecuted, lest when a revolution of humane affaires sets contrary opinions in the throne or chaire, they who were persecuted before, should now themselves become persecutors of others, and so at one time or other, before or after, the wheat be rooted up, and the truth be persecuted. But as these reasons confirme the Law, and this sense of it, so abstracting from the Law, it is of it selfe concluding by an argument *ab incommodo*, and that founded upon the principles of justice, and right reason, as I formerly alledged.

Numb. 8.

* Illi in vos
seviunt qui
nesciunt cum
quo labore ve-
rum invenia-
nt, & quam
difficile cave-
antur errores.
Illi in vos se-
viunt qui nesci-
unt quam va-
rum et arduum
sit carnalia
phantasmata
pia mentis se-
renitate super-
rare. Illi in
vos seviunt
qui nesciunt
quibus & suspi-
riis & gemitu-
bus fiat ut ex-
quantulacum-
que parte possit
intelligi Deus.
Postremo illi in
vos seviunt
qui nullo tali
errore decepti
sunt, quali vos
deceptos vi-
dant.

S. August.
Contr. Ep.
Fund.

4. We are not onely uncertaine of finding out truths in mat-
ters disputable, but we are certaine that the best and ablest
* Doctors of Christendome have been actually deceived in mat-
ters of great concernment, which thing is evident in all those
instances of persons from whose doctrines all sorts of Christi-
ans respectively take liberty to dissent. The errors of *Papias*,
Ireneus, *Lactantius*, *Justin Martyr* in the Millenary opinion, of
Saint *Cyprian*, *Firmilian*, the Asian and African Fathers in the
question of Re-baptization, Saint *Austin* in his decretory and un-
charitable sentence against the unbaptized children of Christian
parents, the Roman or the Greek Doctors in the question of the
procession of the holy Ghost, and in the matter of images,
are examples beyond exception. *Ἀμφὶ δὲ τῷ ἀδράπῳ ὁρίσιν ἀμπακίαι
ἀναείδυντος κέλευστος*. Now if these great personages had been per-
secuted or destroyed for their opinions, who should have answered
the invaluable losse the Church of God should have sustained
in missing so excellent, so exemplary, and so great lights? But
then if these persons erred, and by consequence, might have been
destroyed, what should have become of others whose understand-
ing was lower, and their security lesse, their errors more, and
their danger greater? At this rate all men should have passed
through the fire, for who can escape, when Saint *Cyprian* and
Saint *Austin* cannot? Now to say these persons were not to be
persecuted because although they had errors, yet none condem-
ned by the Church, at that time or before, is to say nothing to the
purpose, nor nothing that is true. Not true, because Saint *Cypri-
anus* error was condemned by Pope *Stephen*, which in the present
sense

ſenſe of the prevailing party in the Church of *Rome*, iſto be condemned by the Church. Not to the purpoſe ; becauſe it is nothing elſe but to ſay that the Church did tolerate their errors. For ſince thoſe opinions were open and manifeſt to the world, that the Church did not condemne them, it was either becauſe thoſe opinions were by the Church not thought to be errors, or if they were, yet ſhe thought fit to tolerate the error and the erring perſon. And if ſhe would doe ſo ſtill, it would in moſt caſes be better then now it is. And yet if the Church had condemned them, it had not altered the caſe as to this queſtion, 'for either the perſons upon the condemnation of their error ſhould have been perſecuted or not. If not, why ſhall they now , againſt the inſtance and precedent of thoſe ages who were confeſſedly wiſe & pious, and whoſe practice are often made to us arguments to follow ? If yea, and that they had been perſecuted , it is the thing which this argument condemnes, and the loſſe of the Church had been invaluable in the loſing or the provocation and temptation of ſuch rare perſonages : and the example and the rule of ſo ill conſequence , that all perſons might upon the ſame ground have ſuffered , and though ſome had eſcaped , yet no man could have any more ſecurity from puniſhment then from error.

5. Either the diſagreeing perſon is in error, or not, but a true believer ; in either of the caſes to perſecute him is extremely imprudent. For if he be a true beleever, then it is a cleere caſe that we doe open violence to God, and his ſervants, and his truth. If he be in error, what greater folly and ſtupidity then to give to error the glory of Martyrdome, and the advantages which are accidentally conſequent to a perſecution ? For as it was true of the Martyrs *Quoties morimur toties naſcimur*, and the increaſe of their trouble was the increaſe of their confidence and the eſtabliſhment of their perſwaſions : ſo it is in all falſe opinions ; for that an opinion is true or falſe is extrinſecall or accidentall to the conſequents and advantages it gets by being aſſicted. And there is a popular pity that followes all perſons in miſery, and that compaſſion breeds likeneſſe of affections, and that very often produces likeneſſe of perſwaſion ; and ſo much the rather, becauſe there ariſes a jealousie and pregnant ſuſpicion that they who per-

Numb. 9.

secute an opinion are destitute of sufficient arguments to confute it, and that the hangman is the best disputant. For if those arguments which they have for their owne doctrine were a sufficient ground of confidence & perswasion, men would be more willing to use those means arguments which are better compliances with humane understanding, which more naturally doe satisfie it, which are more humane and Christian, then that way which satisfies none, which destroyes many, which provokes more, which makes all men jealous. To which adde that those who dye for their opinion, leave in all men, great arguments of the heartinesse of their beliefe, of the confidence of their perswasion, of the piety and innocencie of their persons, of the purity of their intention and simplicity of purposes; that they are persons totally disinterest, and separate from designe. For no interest can be so great as to be put in balance against a mans life and his soul, & he does very imprudently serve his ends who seeingly & fore-knowingly loses his life in the prosecution of them. Just as if *Tullius* should offer to dye for *Sempronius* upon condition he might receive twenty talents when he had done his work. It is certainly an argument of a great love, and a great confidence, and a great sincerity, and a great hope when a man layes downe his life in attestation of a proposition. *Greater love then this hath no man, then to lay downe his life,* saith our Blessed Saviour. And although laying of a wager is an argument of confidence more then truth, yet laying such a wager, staking of a mans Soule, and pawning his life gives a hearty testimony that the person is honest, confident, resigned, Charitable and Noble. And I know not whether truth can doe a person or a cause more advantages, then these can doe to an error. And therefore besides the impiety, there is great imprudence in Canonizing a hereticke, and consecrating an error by such means, which were better preserv'd as encouragements of truth, and comforts to reall and true Martyrs. And it is not amisse to observe that this very advantage was taken by hereticks who were ready to shew and boast their Catalogues of Martyrs, in particular the *Circumcellians* did so, and the *Donatists*, and yet the first were heretickes, the second Schismaticks. And it was remarkable in the Schollers of *Priscillian*, who, as they had their Master in the reputation of a Saint while he was living, so when he

he was dead, they had him in veneration as a Martyr ; they with reverence and devotion carryed his, and the bodies of his slaine companions to an honourable sepulture, and counted it Religion to sweare by the name of *Priscillian*. So that the extinguishing of the person, gives life and credit to his doctrine, and when he is dead he yet speaks more effectually.

6. It is unnaturall and unreasonable to persecute disagreeing opinions. Unnaturall ; for Understanding being a thing wholly spirituall, cannot be restrained, and therefore neither punished by corporall afflictions. It is in *alienâ republicâ*, a matter of another world ; you may as well cure the colick by brushing a mans clothes, or fill a mans belly with a syllogisme : these things doe not communicate in matter, and therefore neither in action nor passion ; and since all punishments in a prudent government punish the offender to prevent a future crime, and so it proves more medicinall then vindictive, the punitive act being in order to the cure and prevention : and since no punishment of the body can cure a disease in the soule, it is disproportionable in nature, and in all civill government, to punish where the punishment can doe no good. It may be an act of tyrannie, but never of justice. For is an opinion ever the more true or false for being persecuted ? Some men have beleev'd it the more, as being provoked into a confidence, and vexed into a resolution, but the thing it selfe is not the truer, and though the hangman may confute a man with an inexplicable dilemma, yet not convince his understanding, for such premises can inferre no conclusion, but that of a mans life : and a Wolfe may as well give lawes to the understanding, as he whose dictates are onely propounded in violence, and writ in blood. And a dog is as capable of a law as a man, if there be no choice in his obedience, nor discourse in his choice, nor reason to satisfie his discourse. And as it is unnaturall, so it is unreasonable, that *Sempronius* should force *Cassius* to be of his opinion, because *Sempronius* is Consul this yeare, and commands the *Legions* : As if he that can kill a man cannot but be infallible : and if he be not, why should I doe violence to my conscience, because he can doe violence to my person ?

7. Force in matters of opinion can doe no good, but is very
apt

Numb. 10.

Numb. 11.

apt to doe hurt; for no man can change his opinion when he will, or be satisfied in his reason that his opinion is false, because discountenanced. If a man could change his opinion when he lists, he might cure many inconveniences of his life: all his feares and his sorrowes would soone disband, if he would but alter his opinion, whereby he is perswaded, that such an accident that afflicts him is an evill, and such an object formidable; let him but beleve himselfe impregnable, or that he receives a benefit when he is plundered, disgraced, imprisoned, condemned, and afflicted, neither his sleepes need to be disturbed, nor his quietnesse discomposed. But if a man cannot change his opinion when he lists, nor ever does heartily or resolutely but when he cannot do otherwise, then to use force, may make him an hypocrite, but never to be a right beleever, and so instead of erecting a trophée to God and true Religion, we build a Monument for the Devill. Infinite examples are recorded in Church story to this very purpose: But *Socrates* instances in one for all; for when *Eleusius* Bishop of *Cyzicum* was threatned by the Emperour *Valens* with banishment and confiscation, if he did not subscribe to the decree of *Ariminum*, at last he yeilded to the *Arrian* opinion, and presently fell into great torment of Conscience, openly at *Cyzicum* recanted the error, asked God and the Church forgiveness, and complain'd of the Emperours injustice, and that was all the good the *Arrian* party got by offering violence to his Conscience. And so many families in Spain which are as they call them new Christians, and of a suspected faith, into which they were forc'd by the tyrannic of the Inquisition, and yet are secret Moores, is evidence enough, of the *inconvenience of preaching a doctrine in ore gladii *cruentandi*. For it either punishes a man for keeping a good conscience, or forces him into a bad; it either punishes sincerity, or perswades hypocrisie; it persecutes a truth, or drives into error: and it teaches a man to dissemble and to be safe, but never to be honest.

8. It is one of the glories of Christian Religion, that it was so pious, excellent, miraculous and perswasive, that it came in upon its owne piety and wisdom, with no other force but a torrent of arguments and demonstration of the Spirit; a mighty rushing wind to beat downe all strong holds, and every high thought

and

*Ejusmodi fuit
Hippocentauri
conversio, cuius
quidem species
decepit Augusti-
na ut opinatur
et haereticos
licet non morte
trucidandos
vis tamen cor-
rendos. Expe-
rientiam de-
monstravit eos
sem facile ad
Arianismum
transisse atq;
ad Catholicis-
mum, cum Ari-
ani Principes
verum in rei ci-
vitate potuer-
unt.

Numb. 12.

and imagination ; but towards the perſons of men it was alwayes full of meekneſſe and charity, compliance and toleration , condeſcenſion and bearing with one another, *reſtoring perſons overtaken with an error, in the ſpirit of meekneſſe, conſidering left we alſo be tempted.* The conſideration is as prudent, and the propoſition as juſt as the precept is charitable, and the precedent was pious and holy. Now things are beſt conſerved with that which gives it the firſt being, and which is agreeable to its temper and conſtitution. That precept which it chiefly preaches in order to all the bleſſedneſſe in the world, that is, of meekneſſe, mercy and charity, ſhould alſo preſerve it ſelfe and promote its owne intereſt. For indeed nothing will doe it ſo well, nothing doth ſo excellently inſinuate it ſelfe into the underſtandings and affections of men, as when the actions and perſwaſions of a ſect , and every part and principle and promotion are univocall. And it would be a mighty diſparagement to ſo glorious an inſtitution, that in its principle it ſhould be mercifull and humane , and in the promotion and propagation of it ſo inhumane : And it would be improbable and unreaſonable that the ſword ſhould be uſed in the perſwaſion of one propoſition, and yet in the perſwaſion of the whole Religion nothing like it. To doe ſo , may ſerve the end of a temporall Prince, but never promote the honour of Chriſts Kingdome ; it may ſecure a deſigne of *Spaine*, but will very much diſſerve Chriſtendome, to offer to ſupport it by that which good men believe to be a diſtinctive cognoiſſance of the Mahumetan Religion, from the excellencie and piety of Chriſtianity, whoſe ſenſe and ſpirit is deſcribed in thoſe excellent words of *S. Paul*, 2 *Tim.* 2. 24. *The ſervant of the Lord muſt not ſtrive, but be gentle unto all men, in meekneſſe inſtructing thoſe that oppoſe themſelves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging the truth.* They that oppoſe themſelves, muſt not be ſtrucken by any of Gods ſervants ; and if yet any man will ſmite theſe who are his oppoſites in opinion, he will get nothing by that, he muſt quit the title of being a ſervant of God for his paines. And I think a diſtinction of perſons Secular and Eccleſiaſticall will doe no advantage for an eſcape , becauſe even the Secular power if it be Chriſtian, and a ſervant of God muſt not be

πλὴν ἡμῶν. Δὲλαὸν Κυρίῳ ὅτι οὐκ ἐμάρτυς, I meane in thoſe caſes where

meeknesse of instruction is the remedy, or if the case be irremediable, abscission by Censures is the penalty.

Numb. 13.

9. And if yet in the nature of the thing it were neither unjust nor unreasonable, yet there is nothing under God Almighty that hath power over the soule of man, so as to command a perswasion, or to judge a disagreeing: Humane positive Lawes direct all externall acts in order to severall ends, and the Judges take cognisance accordingly, but no man can command the will, or punish him, that obeys the Law against his will: for because its end is served in externall obedience, it neither looks after more, neither can it be served by more, nor take notice of any more. And yet possibly the understanding is lesse subject to humane power then the will, for that humane power hath a command over externall acts which naturally and regularly flow from the will, & *ut plurimum* suppose a direct act of will, but alwayes either a direct or indirect volition, primary or accidentall; but the understanding is a naturall faculty subject to no command, but where the command is it selfe a reason fit to satisfie and perswade it. And therefore God commanding us to beleieve such revelations, perswades and satisfies the understanding, by his commanding and revealing: for there is no greater probation in the world that a proposition is true, then because God hath commanded us to beleieve it. But because no mans command is a satisfaction to the understanding, or a verification of the proposition, therefore the understanding is not subject to humane authority. They may perswade, but not enjoyne where God hath not; and where God hath, if it appears so to him, he is an Infidell if he does not beleieve it. And if all men have no other efficacie or authority on the understanding but by perswasion, proposall and intreaty, then a man is bound to assent but according to the operation of the argument, and the energie of perswasion, neither indeed can he, though he would never so faine, and he that out of feare and too much compliance and desire to be safe, shall desire to bring his understanding with some laxation to the beleife of humane dictates and authorities, may as often misse of the truth as hit it, but is sure alwaies to lose the comfort of truth, because he beleeves it upon indirect, insufficient, and incompetent arguments: and as his desire it should be so is his best argument that it is so, so the
pleasing

pleaſing of men is his beſt reward, and his not being condemned and contradicted all the poſſeſſion of a truth.

SECT. XIII.

Of the practice of Chriſtian Churches towards perſons diſagreeing, and when perſecution firſt came in.

And thus this truth hath been practiced in all times of Chriſtian Religion, when there were no collaterall deſignes on foot, nor intereſts to be ſerved, nor paſſions to be ſatiſfied. In S. Pauls time, though the cenſure of hereſie were not ſo looſe and forward as afterwards, and all that were called Heretiques were cleerly ſuch, and highly criminall; yet as their crime was, ſo was their cenſure, that is, ſpiritual. They were firſt admoniſhed, once at leaſt, for ſo (a) *Irenaus*, (b) *Tertullian*, (c) *Cyprian*, (d) *Ambroſe*, and (e) *Hierome* read that place of *Titus* 3. But ſince that time all men, and at that time ſome read it, *Post unam & alteram admonitionem*, reject a Heretique. Rejection from the communion of Saints after two warnings, that's the penalty. Saint *John* expreſſes it by not eating with them, not bidding them *God ſpeed*, but the perſons againſt whom he decrees ſo ſeverely, are ſuch as denied Chriſt to be come in the fleſh, direct Antichriſts: and let the ſentence be as high as it liſts in this caſe, all that I obſerve is, that ſince in ſo damnable doctrines nothing but ſpiritual cenſure, ſeparation from the communion of the faithfull was enjoyned and preſcribed, we cannot pretend to an Apoſtolicall precedent, if in matters of diſpute and innocent queſtion, and of great uncertainty and no malignity we ſhould proceed to ſentence of death.

(a) l. 3. cap. 31
(b) de preſcript.
(c) lib. ad Quirinum.
(d) in hunc locum.
(e) ibidem.

For it is but an abſurd and illiterate arguing, to ſay that excommunication is a greater puniſhment, and killing, a leſſe; and therefore whoever may be excommunicated may alſo be put to death (which indeed is the reaſoning that *Bellarmino* uſes) for firſt, excommunication is not directly, and of it ſelf a greater puniſhment then corporall death. Becauſe it is indefinite, and incompleat, and in order to a further puniſhment, which if it happens, then the excommunication was the inlet to it, if it does not, the excom-

Numb. 2.

munication did not signifie halfe so much as the losse of a member, much lesse, death. For it may be totally ineffectuall, either by the iniquity of the proceeding, or repentance of the person: and in all times and cases it is a medicine if the man please; if he will not, but perseveres in his impiety, then it is himselfe that brings the Censure to effect, that actuates the judgement and gives a sting, and an energy upon that which otherwise would be *νεκρὸν καὶ ἄνυτον*. Secondly, but when it is at worst, it does not kill the Soule, it onely consignes it to that death which it had deserved, and should have received independently from that sentence of the Church. Thirdly, and yet excommunication is to admirable purpose; for whether it referres to the person censured or to others, it is prudentiall in it selfe, it is exemplary to others, it is medicinall to all. For the person censured, is by this meanes threatned into piety, and the threatning made the more energetically upon him because by fiction of Law, or as it were by a Sacramentall representment the paines of hell are made presentiaall to him; and so becomes an act of prudent judicature, and excellent discipline, and the best instrument of spirituall Government: Because the neerer the threatning is reduced to matter, & the more present and circumstantionable it is made, the more operative it is upon our spirits while they are immersed in matter. And this is the full sense and power of excommunication in its direct intention: consequently and accidentally other evils might follow it, as in the times of the Apostles, the censured persons were buffeted by Satan, and even at this day there is lesse security even to the temporall condition of such a person whom his spirituall parents have Anathematiz'd. But besides this, I know no warrant to affirme any thing of excommunication, for the sentence of the Church does but declare, not effect the finall sentence of damnation. Whoever deserves excommunication deserves damnation; and he that repents shall be saved, though he dye out of the Churches externall Communion, and if he does not repent, he shall be damn'd though he was not excommunicate.

Numb. 3.

But suppose it greater then the sentence of corporall death, yet it followes not, because hereticks may be excommunicate, therefore kill'd, for from a greater to a lesse, in a severall kind of things the argument concludes not. It is a greater thing to make an excellent

cellent diſcourſe then to make a ſhooc, yet he that can doe the greater cannot doe this leſſe. An Angell cannot beget a man, & yet he can doe a greater matter in that kind of operations which we terme ſpirituell and Angelicall. And if this were concluding that whoever may be excommunicate may be kill'd, then, becauſe of excommunications the Church is confeſſed the ſole and intire Judge, ſhe is alſo an abſolute diſpoſer of the lives of perſons. I beleeve this will be but ill doctrine in *Spaine*: for in *Bullâ Cane Domini* the King of *Spaine* is every year excommunicated on Maunday Thursday; but if by the ſame power he might alſo be put to death (as upon this ground he may) the Pope might with more eaſe be inveſted in that part of *S. Peters* patrimony which that King hath invaded and ſurpriz'd. But beſides this, it were extreme harſh Doctrine in a Roman Conſistory, from whence excommunications iſſue for triſles, for fees, for not ſuffering themſelves infinitely to be oppreſſed, for any thing; if this be greater then death, how great a tyrannic is that which does more then kill men for leſs then triſles, or elſe how inconſequent is that argument which concludes its purpoſe upon ſo falſe pretence & ſuppoſition?

Well, however zealous the Apoſtles were againſt hereticks, yet none were by them, or their dictates put to death. The death of *Ananias* and *Saphira*, and the blindneſſe of *Elymas* the Sorcerer amount not to this, for they were miraculous inſtitions: and the firſt was a puniſhment to Vow-breach and Sacriledge, the ſecond of Sorcery, and open conteſtation againſt the Religion of Jeſus Chriſt; neither of them concerned the caſe of this preſent queſtion: or if the caſe were the ſame, yet the authority is not the ſame: For he that inſicted theſe puniſhments was infallible, and of a power competent: But no man at this day is ſo. But as yet, people were converted by Miracles, & Preaching, and Diſputing, and Hereticks by the ſame meanes were redargued, and all men inſtructed, none tortured for their opinion. And this continued till Chriſtian people were vexed by diſagreeing perſons, and were impatient and peeviſh, by their owne too much confidence and the luxuriancy of a prosperous fortune: but then they would not endure perſons that did dogmatize any thing which might intrench upon their reputation or their intereſt. And it is obſervable that no man, nor no age did ever teach the lawfullneſſe of

Numb. 4.

putting hereticks to death, till they grew wanton with proſperity. But when the reputation of the Governours was concerned, when the intereſts of men were indangered, when they had ſomething to loſe, when they had built their eſtimation upon the credit of diſputable queſtions, when they began to be jealous of other men, when they over-valued themſelves and their owne opinions, when ſome perſons invaded Biſhopricks upon pretence of new opinions, then they as they thrived in the favour of Emperours, and in the ſucceſſe of their diſputes, ſollicited the temporall power to baniſh, to fine, to imprifon, and to kill their adverſaries.

Numb. 5.

So that the caſe ſtands thus. In the beſt times, amongſt the beſt men, when there were fewer temporall ends to be ſerved, when Religion and the pure and ſimple deſignes of Chriſtianity were onely to be promoted; in thoſe times and amongſt ſuch men, no perſecution was actuall, nor perſwaded nor allowed towards diſagreeing perſons. But as men had ends of their owne and not of Chriſts, as they receded from their duty, and Religion from its purity, as Chriſtianity began to be compounded with intereſts, and blended with temporall deſignes, ſo men were perſecuted for their opinions. This is moſt apparent, if we conſider when perſecution firſt came in, and if we obſerve how it was checked by the holieſt and the wiſeſt perſons.

Numb. 6.

The firſt great inſtance I ſhall note was in *Priſcillian* and his followers, who were condemned to death by the Tyrant *Maximus*. Which inſtance although *S. Hierom* obſerves as a puniſhment, and judgement for the crime of hereſie, yet is of no uſe in the preſent queſtion, becauſe *Maximus* put ſome Chriſtians of all ſorts to death promiſcuouſly, Catholike and Heretick without choyce, and therefore the *Priſcillianiſts* might as well have called it a judgement upon the Catholiques, as the Catholiques upon them.

Numb. 7.

But when *Urfatus* and *Stacius*, two Biſhops, procured the *Priſcillianiſts* death by the power they had at Court: *S. Martin* was ſo angry at them for their cruelty, that he excommunicated them both. And *S. Ambroſe* upon the ſame ſtock denied his communion to the *Itaciani*. And the account that *Sulpicius* gives of the ſtory is this, *Ho: modo* (ſayes he) *homines luce indigniſſimi peſſimo exemplo necati ſunt*. The example was worſe then the men. If the men were hereticall, the execution of them however was unchriſtian.

But

But it was of more authority that the Nicene Fathers supplicated the Emperour, and prevailed for the banishment of *Arius*, of this we can give no other account, but that by the historie of the time we see baseness enough, and personall misdemeanour, and factiousness of spirit in *Arius*, to have deserved worse then banishment, though the obliquity of his opinion were not put into the ballance; which we have reason to beleve was not so much as considered, because *Constantine* gave toleration to differing opinions, and *Arius* himselfe was restored upon such conditions to his country and office, which would not stand with the ends of the Catholiques, if they had been severe exactors of concurrence and union of persuasions.

I am still within the scene of Ecclesiasticall persons, and am considering what the opinion of the learnedest and the holiest prelates were concerning this great question. If we will beleve Saint *Austin* (who was a credible person) no good man did allow it. *Nullis tamen bonis in Catholicâ hoc placet, si usq; ad mortem in quenquam licet hæreticum sapiatur.* This was *S. Austins* finall opinion; For he had first been of the mind that it was not honest to doe any violence to mis-perswaded persons; and when upon an accident happening in *Hippo* he had altered and retracted that part of the opinion, yet then also he excepted death, and would by no means have any meere opinion made capitall. But for ought appears, *S. Austin* had greater reason to have retracted that retraction, then his first opinion. For his saying of *nullis bonis placet* was as true as the thing was reasonable it should be so. Witnes those known testimonies of (a) *Tertullian*, (b) *Cyprian*, (c) *Lactantius*, (d) *Hierom*, (e) *Severus Sulpitius*, (f) *Minnitius*, (g) *Hilary*, (h) *Damascen*, (i) *Chrysostome*, (k) *Theophylact*, and (l) *Bernard*, and divers others, whom the Reader may find quoted by the Arch-Bishop of *Spalato*, *Lib. 8. de rep. Eccles. cap. 8.*

Against this concurrent testimony my reading can furnish me with no adversarie, nor contrary instances, but in *Atticus* of *C.P. Theodosius* of *Synada*, in *Stacius* & *Ursans* before reckoned. Only indeed some of the later Popes of *Rome* began to be busie and unmercifull, but it was then when themselves were secure, and their interests great, and their temporall concerns highly considerable.

Numb. 8.

Socrat. l. 1. c. 29

Socrat. l. 1. c. 26

Cont. Crescon.

Grammat. l. b.

3. c. 50. vide

eiam Epist. 61.

addulterium.

et Epist. 158.

et 159. et lib.

1. c. 29. cont.

tit. petilian.

vide eiam

Socrat. l. 3. c. 3.

et c. 29.

Lib. 2. cap. 5.

retractat. vide

Epist. 48. ad

vincent. script.

post. retract. et

Epist. 50. ad

Benifac.

(a) ad Scapula.

(b) lib. 3. Ep.

1. Epist

(c) Lib. 5. c.

20.

(d) in cap. 13.

Math. et in

cap. 2. hos.

(e) in vit. S.

Martin.

(f) Octiv.

(g) cont. Aux.

en. Arr.

(h) 3. & 4.

C. 32.

(i) in cap. 13.

Math. homi.

47.

(k) in euang.

Math.

(l) in verba

Apost. fides ex

audiu.

For

Numb. 11.

For it is most true, and not amisse to observe it, that no man who was under the ferula did ever think it lawfull to have opinions forced, or heretiques put to death, and yet many men who themselves have escaped the danger of a pile and a faggot, have changed their opinion just as the case was altered, that is, as themselves were unconcern'd in the suffering. *Petilian, Parmenian, and Gaudentinus*, by no means would allow it lawfull, for themselves were in danger, and were upon that side that is ill thought of and discountenanc'd: but **Gregory* and **Leo*, Popes of *Rome*, upon whose side the authority and advantages were, thought it lawfull they should be punished and persecuted, for themselves were unconcerned in the danger of suffering. And therefore *S. Gregory* commends the Exarch of *Ravenna*, for forcing them who dissented from those men who called themselves the Church. And there were some Divines in the Lower *Germany*, who upon great reasons spake against the tyrannie of the Inquisition, and restraining Prophesying, who yet when they had shaken off the Spanish yoke, began to persecute their Brethren. It was unjust in them, in all men unreasonable and uncharitable, and often increases the error, but never lessens the danger.

Numb. 12.

But yet although the Church, I mean, in her distinct & Clericall capacity, was against destroying or punishing difference in opinion, till the Popes of *Rome* did super-feminate and perswade the contrary, yet the Bishops did perswade the Emperours to make Lawes against Heretiques, and to punish disobedient persons with fines, with imprisonment, with death and banishment respectively. This indeed calls us to a new account. For the Church-men might not proceed to blood nor corporall inflictions, but might they not deliver over to the Secular arme, and perswade Temporall Princes to doe it? For this, I am to say, that since it is notorious that the doctrine of the Clergie was against punishing Heretiques, the Lawes which were made by the Emperours against them might be for restraint of differing Religion in order to the preservation of the publique peace, which is too frequently violated by the division of opinions. But I am not certaine whether that was alwayes the reason, or whether or no some Bishops of the Court did not also serve their owne ends in giving their Princes such untoward counsell; but we find the Lawes made severally
to

Apud Aug. li.
1. c. 7. cont.
Epist. Parme-
nian. c. 1. 2.
c. 3. cont. tit.
Petilian.
** Epist. 1. ad*
Turbinian.
** lib. 1. ep.*
72.

verall purpoſes, in divers caſes and with different ſeverity. *Conſtantine* the Emperour made a Sanction, *Ut parem cum fide-
libus qui errant pacis & quietis fruſtionem gaudentes accipiant.* The
Emperour *Gratian* decreed, *Ut quam quiſq; vellet religionem ſe-
cretur; & conventus Eccleſiaſticos ſemoto metu omnes agerent.*
He excepted the Manichees, the Photinians, and Eunomians.
Theodoſius the elder made a law of death againſt the Anabaptiſts
his time, and baniſh'd *Eunomius*, and againſt other erring per-
ſons appointed a pecuniary mulct; but he did no executions ſo
as his ſanctions, to ſhew they were made in *terrorem* onely.
There were the Lawes of *Valentinian* and *Martian*, decreeing *contra
hereticos qui prava docere tenent*, that they ſhould be put to death;
but *Michael* the Emperour, but *Juſtinian* onely decreed ba-
niſhment.

But what ever whiſpers ſome Politiques might make to their
honours, as the wiſeſt & holieſt did not think it lawful for Church-
men alone to doe executions, ſo neither did they tranſmit ſuch
functions to the Secular Judicature. And therefore when the Ediſt
Macedonius the Preſident was ſo ambiguous, that it ſeemed to
be a death to Heretiques, unleſſe they recanted; *S. Auſtin*
moniſhed him carefully to provide that no Heretique ſhould be
put to death, alledging it alſo not onely to be unchriſtian, but il-
legal alſo, and not warranted by imperiall conſtitutions; for be-
fore his time no Lawes were made for their being put to
death: but however he prevailed, that *Macedonius* publiſhed
another Ediſt, more explicite, and leſſe ſeemingly ſevere. But in
his Epistle to *Donatus*, the African Proconſul, he is more confi-
dent and determinate, *Neceſſitate nobis impaſſa & indiſſa, ut
vobis occidi ab eis eligamus, quam eos occidendos veſtris judiciis
reſervemus.*

But afterwards many got a trick of giving them over to the
Secular power, which at the beſt is no better then hypocrifie, re-
moving envie from themſelves, and laying it upon others, a reſu-
ſciting to doe that in externall act, which they doe in counsell and
probation: which is a tranſmitting the act to another, and re-
turning a proportion of guilt unto themſelves, even their own and
the others too. I end this with the ſaying of *Chryſoſtome*, *Dog-*

*Apud Euseb:
de vita Con-
ſtant.*

*vide Socrat.
l. 7. c. 12.*

*Vid. c. 12. de
heretic. L. ma-
nichees. & leg.
Arian, & l.
Quicumque.*

*Apud Pau-
lum Diacon.
l. 6. & l. 24.
Numb. 11.*

Numb. 12.

*Serm. de Ana-
themate.*

mata impia & qua ab hereticis profecta ſunt arguere & anathematizare oportet, hominibus autem parcendum & pro ſalute eorum erandum.

SECT. XV.

How farre the Church or Governours may aſt to the reſtraining falſe or differing opinions.

BUT although Hereticall perſons are not to be deſtroyed, yet Heresy being a work of the fleſh, and all hereticks criminall perſons, whoſe acts and doctrine have influence upon Communities of men whether Eccleſiaſticall or civill, the governours of the Republique, or Church reſpectively are to do their duties in reſtraining thoſe miſchiefs which may happen to their ſeverall charges, for whoſe indemnity they are anſwerable. And therefore according to the effect or malice of the doctrine or the perſon, ſo the cogniſance of them belongs to ſeverall judicatures. If it be falſe doctrine in any capacity and doth miſchiefe in any ſenſe, or teaches ill life in any inſtance, or incourages evill in any particular, *ſi conſideretur*, theſe men muſt be ſilenced, they muſt be convinced by ſound doctrine, and put to ſilence by ſpirituall evidence, and reſtrained by authority Eccleſiaſticall, that is, by ſpirituall cenſures according as it ſeemes neceſſary to him who is moſt concern'd in the regiment of the Church. For all this we have precept and precedent Apoſtolicall, and much reaſon. For by thus doing, the governour of the Church uſes all that authority that is competent, and all the meanes that is reaſonable, and that proceeding which is regular, that he may diſcharge his cure and ſecure his flock. And that he poſſibly may be deceived in judging a doctrine to be hereticall, and by conſequence the perſon excommunicate ſuffers injury, is no argument againſt the reaſonableneſſe of the proceeding. For all the injury that is, is viſible and in appearance, and ſo is his crime. Judges muſt judge according to their beſt reaſon guided by law of God as their rule, and by evidence and appearance as their beſt inſtrument, and they can judge no better

ter. If the Judges be good and prudent, the error of proceeding will not be great, nor ordinary, and there can be no better establishment of humane judicature, then is a fallible proceeding on an infallible ground; And if the judgement of heresie be made by estimate and proportion of the opinion to a good or a bad life respectively, supposing an error in the deduction, there will be no malice in the conclusion; and that he endeavours to cure piety according to the best of his understanding, and yet doth mistake in his proceeding, is onely an argument that he did his duty after the manner of men, possibly with the piety of a saint, though not with the understanding of an Angel. And the little inconvenience that happens to the person injuriously judged, is abundantly made up in the excellency of the Discipline, the goodness of the example, the care of the publike, and all those great influences into the manners of men which derive from such an act so publickly consign'd. But such publique judgement in matters of opinion must be seldome and curious, and never but secure piety, and a holy life; for in matters speculative, as all determinations are fallible, so scarce any of them are to purpose, nor ever able to make compensation of either side, either for the publike fraction, or the particular injustice if it should so happen to be censured.

But then as the Church may proceed thus far, yet no Christian man, or Community of men may proceed farther. For if they be deceived in their judgement and censure, and yet have passed onely spirituall censures, they are totally ineffectuall, and come to nothing, there is no effect remaining upon the soule, and such censures are not to meddle with the body so much as indirectly. But if any other judgement passe upon persons erring, such judgements whose effects remaine, if the person be unjustly censured, nothing will answer and make compensation for such injuries. If a person be excommunicate unjustly, it will doe him no hurt; but if he be killed or dismembred unjustly, that censure and indignation is not made ineffectuall by his innocence, he is certainly kill'd and dismembred. So that as the Churches authority in such cases so restrained and made prudent, cautelous, and orderly, is just and competent: so the proceeding is reasonable, it is pro-

Numb. 2.

vident for the publike, and the inconveniences that may fall upon particulars so little, as that the publike benefit makes ample compensation, so long as the proceeding is but spirituall.

Numb. 3.

This discourse is in the case of such opinions, which by the former rules are formall heresies, and upon practicall inconveniences. But for matters of question which have not in them an enmity to the publike tranquillity, as the Republique hath nothing to doe, upon the ground of all the former discourses; so if the Church meddles with them where they doe not derive into ill life, either in the person or in the consequent, or else are destructions of the foundation of Religion, which is all one, for that those fundamentall articles are of greatest necessity in order to a vertuous and godly life, which is wholly built upon them, (and therefore are principally necessary) If she meddles further, otherwise then by preaching, and conferring, and exhortation, she becomes tyrannicall in her government, makes her selfe an immediate judge of consciences and perswasions, lords it over their faith, destroyes unity, and charity; and as if he that dogmatizes the opinion becomes criminall, if he troubles the Church with an immodest, peevish, and pertinacious proposall of his article, not simply necessary; so the Church does not doe her duty, if she so condemnes it *pro tribunali* as to enioyne him and all her subjects to beleve the contrary. And as there may be pertinacy in doctrine, so there may be pertinacy in judging, and both are faults. The peace of the Church and the unity of her doctrine is best conserved when it is judged by the proportion it hath to that rule of unity which the Apostles gave, that is the Creed for Articles of meer belief, and the precepts of Jesus Christ, and the practicall rules of piety, which are most plaine and easie, and without controversie, set downe in the Gospels, and Writings of the Apostles. But to multiply articles, and adopt them into the family of the faith, and to require assent to such articles which (as *S. Pauls* phrase is) are of doubtfull disputation, equall to that assent wee give to matters of faith, is to build a Tower upon the top of a Bulrush, and the further the effect of such proceedings does extend, the worse they are; the very making
such

such a Law is unreasonable, the inflicting spirituall censures upon them that cannot doe so much violence to their understanding as to obey it, is unjust and ineffectuall; but to punish the person with death, or with corporall infliction, indeed it is effectuall, but it is therefore tyrannicall. We have seen what the Church may doe towards restraining false or differing opinions, next I shall consider by way of Corollarie what the Prince may doe as for his interest, and onely in securing his people, and serving the ends of true Religion.

SECT. XVI.

Whether it be lawfull for a Prince to give toleration to severall Religions.

FOR upon these very grounds we may easily give account of *Numb. 1.* that great question, Whether it be lawfull for a Prince to give toleration to severall Religions.

For first, it is a great fault that men will call the severall sects of Christians by the names of severall Religions. The Religion of J E S U S C H R I S T is the forme of sound doctrine and wholsome words, which is set downe in Scripture indefinitely, actually conveyed to us by plaine places, and separated as for the question of necessary or not necessary by the Symbol of the Apostles. Those impertinencies which the wantonness and vanity of men hath commenced, which their interests have promoted, which serve not truth so much as their own ends, are farre from being distinct Religions; for matters of opinion are no parts of the worship of God, nor in order to it, but as they promote obedience to his Commandments, and when they contribute towards it, are in that proportion as they contribute parts and actions, and minute particulars of that Religion to whose end they doe, or pretend to serve. And such are all the sects and all the pretences of Christians, but pieces and minutes of Christianity, if they doe serve the great end, as every man for his owne sect and interest bekeves for his share it does.

2. Toleration hath a double ſenſe or purpoſe, for ſometimes by it men underſtand a publick licence and exerciſe of a ſect: Sometimes it is onely an indemnity of the perſons privately to convene and to opine as they ſee cauſe, and as they meane to answer to God. Both theſe are very much to the ſame purpoſe, unleſſe ſome perſons whom we are bound to ſatiſſie be ſcandaliz'd, and then the Prince is bound to doe as he is bound to ſatiſſie. To God it is all one. For abſtracting from the offence of perſons, which is to be conſidered juſt as our obligation is to content the perſons, it is all one whether we indulge to them to meet publickly or privately, to do actions of Religion concerning which we are not perſwaded that they are truly holy. To God it is juſt one to be in the dark and in the light, the thing is the ſame, onely the Circumſtance of publick and private is different, which cannot be concerned in any thing, nor can it concerne any thing but the matter of Scandall and relation to the minds and fantaſies of certain perſons.

Numb. 3.

3. So that to tolerate is not to perſecute. And the queſtion whether the Prince may tolerate divers perſwaſions, is no more then whether he may lawfully perſecute any man for not being of his opinion. Now in this caſe he is juſt ſo to tolerate diversity of perſwaſions as he is to tolerate ſeuerall actions, for no opinion is judicable, nor no perſon puniſhable, but for a ſin, and if his opinion by reaſon of its managing, or its effect, be a ſinne in it ſelfe, or becomes a ſinne to the perſon, then as he is to doe towards other ſinnes, ſo to that opinion or man ſo opining. But to believe ſo, or not ſo, when there is no more but meere believing, is not in his power to enjoyne, therefore not to puniſh. And it is not onely lawfull to tolerate diſagreeing perſwaſions, but the authority of God onely is competent to take notice of it, and inſallible to determine it, and fit to judge, and therefore no humane authority is ſufficient to doe all thoſe things which can juſtifie the inflicting temporall puniſhments upon ſuch as doe not conforme in their perſwaſions to a rule or authority which is not only fallible, but ſuppoſed by the diſagreeing perſon to be actually deceived.

Numb. 4.

But I conſider that in the toleration of a different opinion,
Re-

Religion is not properly and immediately concerned, ſo as in any degree to be endangered. For it may be ſafe in diverſity of perſwaſions, and it alſo a part of Chriſtian * Religion that the liberty of mens Conſciences ſhould be preſerved in all things, where God hath not ſet a limit and made a reſtraint; that the ſoule of man ſhould be free, and acknowledge no maſter but Jeſus Chriſt; that matters ſpiritual ſhould not be reſtrain'd by puniſhments corporall; that the ſame meekeneſſe and charity ſhould be preſerved in the promotion of Chriſtianity, that gave it foundation and incremeat, & firmneſſe in its firſt publication; that concluſions ſhould not be more dogmaticall then the vertuall reſolution and efficacy of the premiſes: And that the perſons ſhould not more certainly be condemned then their opinions confuted; and laſtly, that the infirmities of men and difficulties of things ſhould be both put in ballance to make abatement in the definitive ſentence againſt mens perſons. But then becauſe tolleration of opinions is not properly a queſtion of Religion, it may be a queſtion of policy: And although a man may be a good Chriſtian, though he believe an error not fundamentall, and not directly or evidently impious, yet his opinion may accidentally diſturbe the publick peace through the over-activenesse of the perſon, and the confidence of their beliefe and the opinion of its appendant neceſſity, and therefore tolleration of differing perſwaſions in theſe caſes is to be conſidered upon politicall grounds, and is juſt ſo to be admitted or denied as the opinions or tolleration of them may conſiſt with the publicke and neceſſary ends of Government. Onely this: As Chriſtian Princes muſt looke to the intereſt of their Government, ſo eſpecially muſt they conſider the intereſts of Chriſtianity, & not call every redargution or modeſt diſcovery of an eſtabliſhed error, by the name of diſturbance of the peace. For it is very likely that the peevihneſſe and impatience of contradiction in the Governours may break the peace. Let them remember the gentleneſſe of Chriſtianity, the Liberty of Conſciences which ought to be preſerved, and let them doe juſtice to the perſons, whoever they are that are peeviſh, provided no mans perſon be over-borne with prejudice. For if it be neceſſary for all men to ſubſcribe to the preſent eſtabliſhed Religion, by the ſame reaſon

* *Humani juris & naturalis poeſtatis, unicuique quod putaverit, colere Sed nec religionis eſt cogere religionem, quæ ſuſcipi ſponte debet, non vi. Tertul. ad Scapulam.*

at another time a man may be bound to ſubſcribe to the contradictory, and ſo to all Religions in the world. And they only, who by their too much confidence intitle God to all their fancies, and make them to be queſtions of Religion, and evidences for Heaven, or conſignations to Hell, they onely think this doctrine unreaſonable, and they are the men that firſt diſturb the Churches peace, and then thinke there is no appeaſing the tumult but by getting the victory. But they that conſider things wiſely, underſtand that ſince ſalvation and damnation depend not upon impertinencies, and yet that publick peace and tranquillity may, the Prince is in this caſe to ſeek how to ſecure Government, and the iſſues and intentions of that, while there is in theſe caſes directly no inſecurity to Religion, unleſſe by the accidentall uncharitableneſſe of them that diſpute: Which uncharitableneſſe is alſo much prevented when the publick peace is ſecured, and no perſon is on either ſide engaged upon * revenge, or troubled with diſgrace, or vexed with puniſhments by any decretory ſentence againſt him. It was the ſaying of a wiſe ſtates-man (I meane *Thuanus*) *Heretici qui pace data factionibus ſcinduntur, perſecutione ununtur contra Remp.* If you perſecute hereticks or diſcrepant, they unite themſelves as to a common defence: If you permit them, they divide themſelves upon private intereſt, and the rather, if this intereſt was an ingredient of the opinion.

* *Dextera principis capis indulgentia mentis,*
Aſperitas adit ſcava; bella pa. 11.

Numb. 5.

The Summe is this, it concernes the duty of a Prince becauſe it concernes the Honour of God, that all vices and every part of ill life be diſcounſenanced and reſtrain'd: And therefore in relation to that, opinions are to be dealt with. For the underſtanding being to direct the will, and opinions to guide our practices, they are conſiderable onely as they teach impiety and vice, as they either diſhonour God or diſobey him. Now all ſuch doctrines are to be condemned; but for the perſons preaching ſuch Doctrines, if they neither juſtifie nor approve the pretended Conſequences which are certainly impious, they are to be ſeparated from that conſideration. But if they know ſuch conſequences and allow them, or if they do not ſtay till the doctrines produce impiety, but take ſinne before hand, and mannage them impiouſly in any ſenſe; or if either themſelves or their doctrine doe really
and

and without colour or fained pretext, diſturb the publique peace * and juſt intereſts, they are not to be ſuffered. In all other caſes it is not onely lawfull to permit them, but it is alſo neceſſary, that Princes and all in authority ſhould not perſecute diſcrepant opinions. And in ſuch caſes wherein perſons not otherwiſe incompetent are bound to reprove an error, (as they are in many) in all theſe if the Prince makes reſtraint, he hinders men from doing their duty, and from obeying the Lawes of J E S U S CHRIST.

* Extat prudens monitum Meccanatis apud Dionem Caſſium ad Auguſtum in hac verba. Eos vero qui in Divina aliquid intro-

habent, & coercent, non Deorum ſolum cauſa: ſed quia nova numina hi tales intraducunt, multos impellunt ad mutationem rerum. unde conjurationes, ſeditiones, Conciliabula exiſtunt, res proſecto minime conducibiles principibus. Et legibus quoque expreſſum eſt, quod in religionem committitur, in omnium ſectur injuriam.

SECT. XVII.

Of compliance with diſagreeing perſons or weak conſciences in generall.

VPon theſe grounds it remains that we reduce this doctrine to practicall Concluſions, and conſider among the differing ſects and opinions which trouble theſe parts of Chriſtendome, and come into our concernment, which ſects of Chriſtians are to be tolerated, and how farre? and which are to be reſtrained and puniſhed in their ſeverall proportions?

Numb. 1.

The firſt conſideration is, that ſince diverſity of opinions does more concerne publique peace then religion, what is to be done to perſons who diſobey a publique ſanction upon a true allegation; that they cannot believe it to be lawfull to obey ſuch conſtitutions, although they diſ-believe them upon inſufficient grounds, that is, whether in *conſtituta lege* diſagreeing perſons or weak conſciences are to be complied withall, and their diſobeying and diſagreeing tolerated?

Numb. 2.

1. In this queſtion there is no diſtinction can be made between

Numb. 3.

E c

perſons

persons truly weak, and but pretending so. For all that pretend to it, are to be allowed the same liberty whatsoever it be; for no mans spirit is knowne to any, but to God and himselfe; and therefore pretences and realities in this case, are both alike in order to the publike toleration. And this very thing is one argument to perswade a Negative. For the chiefe thing in this case is the concernment of publique government, which is then most of all violated, when what may prudently be permitted to some purposes, may be demanded to many more, and the piety of the Lawes abused to the impiety of other mens ends. And if laws be made so malleable, as to comply with weak consciences, he that hath a mind to disobey, is made impregnable against the coercitive power of the Law by this pretence. For a weak conscience signifies nothing in this case, but a dislike of the Law upon a contrary perswasion. For if some weak consciences doe obey the law, and others doe not, it is not their weaknesse indefinitely that is the cause of it, but a definite and particular perswasion to the contrary. So that if such a pretence be excuse sufficient from obeying, then the law is a sanction obliging every one to obey that hath a mind to it, and he that hath not, may choose, that is, it is no Law at all, for he that hath a mind to it may doe it if there be no Law, and he that hath no mind to it need not for all the Law.

Numb. 4.

And therefore the wit of man cannot prudently frame a law of that temper, and expedient, but either he must lose the formality of a law, and neither have power coercitive nor obligatory, but *ad arbitrium inferiorum*, or else it cannot antecedently to the particular case give leave to any sort of men to disagree or disobey.

Numb. 5.

2. Suppose that a Law be made with great reason so as to satisfy divers persons pious & prudent, that it complies with the necessity of government, and promotes the interest of Gods service and publike order, it may easily be imagined that these persons which are obedient sons of the Church, may be as zealous for the publike order and discipline of the Church, as others for their opinion against it, and may be as much scandalized if disobedience

bedience be tolerated, as others are if the Law be exacted, and what shall be done in this case? Both sorts of men cannot be complied withall, because as these pretend to be offended at the Law, and by consequence (if they understand the consequences of their owne opinion) at them that obey the Law: so the others are justly offended at them that unjustly disobey it. If therefore there be any on the right side as confident and zealous as they who are on the wrong side, then the disagreeing persons are not to be complied with, to avoid giving offence; for if they be, offence is given to better persons, and so the mischief, which such complying seeks to prevent, is made greater and more unjust, obedience is discouraged, and disobedience is legally canonized for the result of a holy and a tender conscience.

3. Such complying with the disagreements of a sort of men, is the totall overthrow of all Discipline, and it is better to make no Lawes of publique worship, then to rescind them in the very constitution: and there can be no end in making the sanction, but to make the Law ridiculous, and the authority contemptible. For to say that complying with weake consciences in the very framing of a Law of Discipline, is the way to preserve unity, were all one as to say, To take away all Lawes is the best way to prevent disobedience. In such matters of indifferencie, the best way of cementing the fraction, is to unite the parts in the authority, for then the question is but one, *viz.* Whether the authority must be obeyed or not? But if a permission be given of disputing the particulars, the questions become next to infinite. A Mirrour when it is broken represents the object multiplyed and divided: but if it be entire and through one centre transmits the species to the eye, the Vision is one and naturall. Lawes are the Mirrour in which men are to dresse and compose their actions, and therefore must not be broken with such clauses of exception which may without remedy be abused to the prejudice of authority, and peace, and all humane sanctions. And I have knowne in some Churches that this pretence hath been nothing but a designe to discredit the Law, to dismantel the authority that made it, to

raife their owne credit, and a trophy of their zeale, to make it a characteriſtick note of a ſect, and the cogniſance of holy perſons, and yet the men that claim'd exemption from the Lawes, upon pretence of having weak conſciences, if in hearty expreſſion you had told them ſo to their heads, they would have ſpit in your face, and were ſo farre from confeſſing: themſelves weak, that they thought themſelves able to give Lawes to Chriſtendom, to inſtruct the greateſt Clerks, and to Catechize the Church her ſelfe; And which is the worſt of all, they who were perpetually clamorous that the ſeverity of the Lawes ſhould ſlacken as to their particular, and in matter adiaphorous (in which, if the Church hath any authority, ſhe hath power to make Lawes) to indulge a leave to them to doe as they liſt, yet were the moſt imperious amongſt men, moſt decretory in their ſentences, and moſt impatient of any diſagreeing from them though in the leaſt minute and particular: whereas by all the juſtice of the world, they who perſwade ſuch a compliance in matters of fact, and of ſo little queſtion, ſhould not deny to tolerate perſons that differ in queſtions of great difficulty and conteſtation.

Numb. 7.

4. But yet ſince all things almoſt in the world have beene made matters of diſpute, and the will of ſome men, and the malice of others, and the infinite indoltry and pertinacie of conteſting and reſolution to conquer hath abuſed ſome perſons innocently into a perſwaſion, that even the Lawes themſelves, though never ſo prudently conſtituted, are ſuperſtitious or impious, ſuch perſons who are otherwiſe pious, humble and religious, are not to be deſtroyed for ſuch matters, which in themſelves are not of concernment to ſalvation, and neither are ſo accidentally to ſuch men and in ſuch caſes where they are innocently abuſed, and they erre without purpoſe and deſigne. And therefore if there be a publike diſpoſition in ſome perſons to diſlike Lawes of a certaine quality, if it be fore-ſeene it is to be conſidered in *lege dicenda*; and whatever inconvenience or particular offence is fore-ſeene, is either to be directly avoided in the Law, or elſe a compenſation in the excellency of the

the Law, and certaine advantages, made to out-weigh their pretensions: But *in lege jam d'et'ā*, becauſe there may be a neceſſity ſome perſons ſhould have a liberty indulged them, it is neceſſary that the Governours of the Church ſhould be intruſted with a power to conſider the particular caſe, and indulge a liberty to the perſon, and grant perſonall diſpenſations. This I ſay is to be done at ſeverall times, upon particular inſtance, upon ſingular conſideration, and new emergencies. But that a whole kind of men, ſuch a kind to which all men without poſſibility of being confuted may pretend, ſhould at once in the very frame of the Law be permitted to diſobey, is to nullifie the Law, to deſtroy Diſcipline, and to hallow diſobedience; it takes away the obliging part of the Law, and makes that the thing enacted ſhall not be enjoyn'd, but tolerated onely: it deſtroys unity and uniformity, which to preſerve was the very end of ſuch lawes of Diſcipline: it bends the rule to the thing which is to be ruled, ſo that the law obeyes the ſubject, not the ſubject the law: it is to make a law for particulars, not upon generall reaſon and congruity, againſt the prudence and deſigne of all Lawes in the world, and abſolutely without the example of any Church in Chriſtendome; it prevents no ſcandall, for ſome will be ſcandalized at the authority it ſelfe, ſome at the complying, and remiſſneſſe of Diſcipline, and ſeverall men at matters, and upon ends contradictory: All which cannot, ſome ought not to be complied withall.

6. The ſumme is this. The end of the Lawes of Diſcipline are in an immediate order to the conſervation and ornament of the publique, and therefore the Lawes muſt not ſo tolerate, as by conſerving perſons to deſtroy themſelves and the publique benefit, but if there be cauſe for it, they muſt be taſſated, or if there be no ſufficient cauſe, the complyings muſt be ſo as may beſt preſerve the particulars in conjunction with the publique end, which becauſe it is primarily intended, is of greateſt conſideration. But the particulars whether of caſe or perſon are to be conſidered occaſionally and emergently by the Judges, but cannot antecedently and regularly be determined by a Law.

Numb. 8.

Numb. 9.

But this ſort of men is of ſo generall pretence, that all Lawes and all Judges may eaſily be abuſed by them. Thoſe ſects which are ſignified by a Name, which have a ſyſteme of Articles, a body of profeſſion, may be more cleerly determined in their queſtion concerning the lawfulneſſe of permitting their profeſſions and aſſemblies.

I ſhall inſtance in two, which are moſt troubleſome and moſt diſlik'd; and by an account made of theſe, we may make judgement what may be done towards others whoſe errors are not apprehended of ſo great malignity. The men I meane are the Anabaptiſts and the Papiſts.

SECT.

SECT. 18.

A particular consideration of the opinions of the Anabaptists.

IN the Anabaptists I consider onely their two capitall opinions, the one against the baptisme of infants, the other against Magistracy: and because they produce different judgements and various effects, all their other fancies which vary as the Moon does, may stand or fall in their proportion and likeness to these. Numb. 1.

And first I consider their denying baptisme to infants; although it be a doctrine justly condemned by the most sorts of Christians, upon great grounds of reason, yet possibly their defence may be so great, as to take off much, and rebate the edge of their adversaries assault. It will be neither unpleasant nor unprofitable to draw a short scheme of plea for each party, the result of which possibly may be, that though they be deceived, yet they have so great excuse on their side, that their error is not impudent or vincible. The baptisme of infants rests wholly upon this discourse. Numb. 2.

When God made a covenant with Abraham for himselfe, and his posterity, into which the Gentiles were reckoned by spirituall adoption, he did for the present consigne that covenant with the Sacrament of circumcision. The extent of which rite, was to all his family, from the *Major dome*, to the *Preselytus domicilio*, and to infants of eight dayes old. Now the very nature of this covenant being a covenant of faith for its formallity, and with all faithfull people for the object; and circumcision being a seale of this covenant, if ever any rite doe supervene to consigne the same covenant, that rite must acknowledge circumcision for its type and precedent. And this the Apostle tels us in expresse doctrine. Now the nature of types, is to give some proportions to its successor the Antitype, and they both being seales of the same righteousness of faith, it will not easily be found where these two seales have any such distinction in their nature or purposes, as to appertaine to persons of differing capacity, and not equally concerne all, and this argument was thought of so much force by some of those excellent men which were Bishops in the primitive church, that a good Bishop writ an Epistle to *S. Cyprian*, to know. Numb. 3.

know of him whether or no it were lawfull to baptize infants before the eighth day, becauſe the type of baptiſme was miniſtered in that circumciſion, he in his diſcourſe ſuppoſing that the firſt rite was a direction to the ſecond, which prevailed with him ſo farre as to believe it to limit every circumſtance.

Numb. 4.

And not onely this type, but the acts of Chriſt which were previous to the inſtitution of baptiſme did prepare our underſtanding by ſuch impreſſes as were ſufficient to produce ſuch perſuaſion in us, that Chriſt intended this miniſtery for the actuall advantage of infants as well as of perſons of underſtanding. For Chriſt commanded that children ſhould be brought unto him, he took them in his armes, he impoſed hands on them and bleſſed them, and without queſtion did by ſuch acts of favour conſigne his love to them, and them to a capacity of an eternall participation of it. And poſſibly the invitation which Chriſt made to all to come to him, all them that are heavy laden, did in its proportion concerne infants as much as others, if they be guilty of Originall ſinne, and if that ſinne be a burthen, and preſſes them to any ſpirituell danger or inconvenience. And it is all the reaſon of the world, that ſince the grace of Chriſt is as large as the prevarication of Adam, all they who are made guilty by the firſt Adam, ſhould be cleaſed by the ſecond. But as they are guilty by another mans act, ſo they ſhould be brought to the Font, to be purified by others, there being the ſame proportion of reaſon, that by others acts, they ſhould be relieved who were in danger of periſhing by the act of others. And therefore *S. Auſtin* argues excellently to this purpoſe. *Accommodat illis mater Eccleſia aliorum pedes, ut veniant; aliorum cor, ut credant; aliorum linguam, ut faciantur: ut quoniam quod egri ſunt, alio peccante pregravantur, ſic cum ſari ſiunt alia conſuente ſalvantur.* And *Iuſtin Martyr*, ἀντιλαβὴ τοῦ διὰ τοῦ βαπτίſματος ἀπαρτὸν τῆς βίης τῆς αἰῶνος τοῦ ἀποκατάſταſτος ἀπὸ τῆς βαπτίſματος.

Serm. 10. de
verb. Apoll.

Reſp. ad Or-
thodoxos.

Numb. 5.

But whether they have originall ſinne or no, yet take them in *puris naturalibus*, they cannot goe to God, or attaine to eternity: to which they were intended in their firſt being and creation, and therefore much leſſe ſince their naturals are impair'd by the tuiſe on humane nature, procur'd by Adams prevarication. And if a naturall agent cannot in *puris naturalibus* attaine to heaven, which

which is a supernaturall end, much lesse when it is loaden with accidentall and grievous impediments. Now then since the only way revealed to us of acquiring Heaven is by Jesus Christ; and the first inlet into Christianity, and access to him is by Baptism, as appears by the perpetuall Analogy of the New Testament; either Infants are not persons capable of that end which is the perfection of humane nature, and to which the soule of man in its being made immortall was essentially design'd, and so are miserable and deficient from the very end of humanity, if they die before the use of reason; or else they must be brought to Christ by the Church doores, that is by the Font and waters of Baptism.

And in reason, it seemes more pregnant and plausible that Infants rather than men of understanding should be baptized: For since the efficacy of the Sacraments depends upon Divine Institution and immediate benediction, and that they produce their effects independently upon man, in them that doe not hinder their operation; since Infants cannot by any act of their own promote the hope of their own salvation, which men of reason and choice may, by acts of vertue & election; it is more agreeable to the goodnesse of God, the honour and excellency of the Sacrament, and the necessity of its institution that it should in Infants supply the want of humane acts and free obedience. Which the very thing it selfe seemes to say it does, because its effect is from God, and requires nothing on man's part, but that its efficacy bee not hindered: And then in Infants, the disposition is equall, and the necessity more; they cannot *ponere obicem*, and by the same reason cannot doe others acts, which without the Sacraments doe advantage us towards our hopes of heaven, and therefore have more need to be supplied by an act, and an Institution Divine and supernaturall.

And this is not only necessary in respect of the condition of Infants in capacity, to doe acts of grace, but also in obedience to Divine precept. For Christ made a Law whose Sanction is with an exclusive negative to them that are not baptized, [*Unless a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he shall not enter into the Kingdoms of heaven;*] If then Infants have a capacity of being co-heires with Christ in the Kingdom of his

Numb. 6.

Numb. 7.

Father, as Chriſt affirms they have, by ſaying [*for of ſuch is the kingdom of heaven*] then there is a neceſſity that they ſhould be brought to Baptiſm, there being an abſolute excluſion of all perſons unbaptized, and all perſons not ſpiritually from the kingdom of heaven.

Numb. 8.

But indeed, it is a deſtruction of all the hopes and happineſſe of Infants, a denying to them an exemption from the final condition of Beaſts and Inſectiles, or elſe a deſigning of them to a worſe miſery, to ſay that God hath not appointed ſome externall or internall meanes of bringing them to an eternall happineſſe: Internall they have none; for Grace being an improvement and heighning the faculties of nature, in order to a heighen'd and ſupernaturall end, Grace hath no influence or efficacy upon their faculties, who can do no naturall acts of underſtanding: And if there be no externall meanes, then they are deſtitute of all hopes, and poſſibilities of ſalvation.

Numb. 9.

But thanks be to God, he hath provided better and told us accordingly, for he hath made a promiſe of the holy Ghoſt to Infants as well as to men: *The Promiſe is made to you and to your children*, ſaid S. Peter; *The Promiſe of the Father, the Promiſe that he would ſend the holy Ghoſt*: Now if you aſk how this Promiſe ſhall be convey'd to our children, we have an expreſſe out of the ſame Sermon of S. Peter, *Be baptized, and ye ſhall receive the gift of the holy Ghoſt*; So that therefore becauſe the holy Ghoſt is promiſed, and Baptiſm is the meanes of receiving the Promiſe, therefore Baptiſm pertaines to them, to whom the Promiſe which is the effect of Baptiſm does appertaine. And that we may not think this Argument is fallible, or of humane collection, obſerve that it is the Argument of the ſame Apoſtle in expreſſe termes: For in the caſe of *Cornelius* and his Family, he juſtified his proceeding by this very medium, *Shall we deny Baptiſm to them who have received the gift of the holy Ghoſt as well as we?* Which Diſcourſe if it be reduced to form of Argument ſayes this; They that are capable of the ſame Grace are receptive of the ſame ſign; but then (to make the Syllogiſm up with an aſſumption proper to our preſent purpoſe) Infants are capable of the ſame Grace, that is of the holy Ghoſt (for the Promiſe is made to our Children

Act. 1. 32. 39.

as well as to us, and *S. Paul* ſayes the Children of believing Parents are holy, and therefore have the holy Ghost who is the Fountaine of holineſſe and ſanctification) therefore they are to receive the ſign and the ſeale of it, that is, the Sacrament of Baptiſm.

And indeed ſince God entred a Covenant with the Jewes, *Numb. 10.* which did alſo actually involve their Children, and gave them a ſign to eſtabliſh the Covenant, and its appendant Promiſe, either God does not ſo much love the Church as he did the Synagogue, and the mercies of the Goſpel are more reſtrain'd, then the mercies of the Law, God having made a Covenant with the Infants of *Iſrael*, and none with the Children of Chriſtian Parents; or if he hath, yet we want the comfort of its Conſignation; and unleſſe our Children are to be baptiz'd, and ſo intitled to the Promiſes of the new Covenant, as the Jewish Babes were by Circumciſion, this mercy which appertaines to Infants is ſo ſecret and undeclar'd and unconfign'd, that wee want much of that mercy and outward Teſtimony which gave them comfort and aſſurance.

And in proportion to theſe Precepts and Revelations was the praſtiſe Apoſtolicall: For they (to whom Chriſt gave in Precept to make Diſciples all Nations baptizing them, and knew that Nations without Children never were, and that therefore they were paſſively concern'd in that commiſſion,) baptized whole Families, particularly that of *Stephanus* and divers others, in which it is more then probable there were ſome Minors if not ſucking Babes. And this praſtiſe did deſcend upon the Church in alter Ages by Tradition Apoſtolicall: Of this we have ſufficient Teſtimony from *Origen*, *Pro hoc Eccleſia ab Apoſtoliſ traditionem accepit, etiam parvulis baptiſmum dare*: And *S. Auſtin*, *Hoc Eccleſia à majorum fide percepit*: And generally all Writers (as *Calvin* ſayes) affirm the ſame thing: For *nullus eſt Scriptor tam vetuſtus, qui non ejus originem ad Apoſtolorum ſaculum pro certo referat*. From hence the Concluſion is, that Infants ought to be baptiz'd, that it is ſimply neceſſary, that they who deny it are Hereticks, and ſuch are not to be endured becauſe they deny to Infants hopes and take away the poſſibility of their ſalvation, which is revealed to us

Numb. 11.

In Rom. 6. tom.

2. pag. 543.

Serm. 10. de

verbi Apoſt. c. 2.

4. Inſtit. cap. 16.

§. 8.

on no other condition of which they are capable but Baptiſm. For by the inſinuation of the Type, by the action of Chriſt, by the title Infants have to Heaven, by the precept of the Goſpel, by the Energy of the Promiſe, by the reaſonableneſſe of the thing, by the infinite neceſſity on the Infants part, by the praſtiſe Apoltoſcall, by their Tradition, and the univerſall praſtiſe of the Church; by all theſe God and good people proclaime the law-fulneſſe, the conveniency, and the neceſſity of Infants Baptiſm.

Numb. 12.

To all this, the *Anabaptiſt* gives a ſoft and gentle Answer, that it is a goodly harangue, which upon ſtriſt examination will come to nothing, that it pretends ſairely and ſignifies little; That ſome of theſe Allegations are falſe, ſome impertinent, and all the reſt inſufficient.

Numb. 13.

For the Argument from Circumciſion is invalid upon infinite conſiderations; Figures and Types prove nothing, unleſſe a Commandement goe along with them, or ſome expreſſe to ſignifie ſuch to be their purpoſe: For the Deluge of Waters and the Ark of *Noah* were a figure of Baptiſm ſaid *Peter*; and if therefore the circumſtances of one ſhould be drawn to the other, we ſhould make Baptiſm a prodigy rather then a Rite: The Paſchall Lamb was a Type of the Eucharift which ſucceeds the other as Baptiſm does to Circumciſion; but becauſe there was in the manducation of the Paſchall Lamb, no preſcription of Sacramental drink, ſhall we thence conelude that the Eucharift is to be minitred but in one kind? And even in the very inſtance of this Argument, ſuppoſing a correſpondence of analogy between Circumciſion and Baptiſm, yet there is no correſpondence of identity: For although it were granted that both of them did conſign the Covenant of Faith, yet there is nothing in the circumſtance of childrens being circumciſed that ſo concerns that Myſtery, but that it might very well be given to Children, and yet Baptiſm only to men of reaſon; becauſe Circumciſion left a Character in the fleſh, which being imprinted upon Infants did its work to them when they came to age; and ſuch a Character was neceſſary becauſe there was no word added to the ſign; but Baptiſm imprints nothing that remains on the body, and if it leaves a Character at all it is upon the ſoule, to which alſo the word is added which is as much

a part of the Sacrament as the ſigne it ſelfe is; for both which reaſons, it is requiſite that the perſons baptized ſhould be capable of reaſon, that they may be capable both of the word of the Sacrament, and the impreſſe made upon the Spirit: Since therefore the reaſon of this parity does wholly faile, there is no thing left to inferre a neceſſity of complying in this circumſtance of age any more then in the other annexes of the Type: And the caſe is cleare in the Biſhop's Queſtion to *Cyprian*, for why ſhall not Infants be baptized juſt upon the eighth day as well as circumciſed? If the correſpondence of the Rites be an Argument to inferre one circumſtance which is impertinent and accidentall to the myſteriousneſſe of the Rite, why ſhall it not inferre all? And then alſo Femals muſt not be baptizd, becauſe they were not circumciſed: But it were more proper if we would underſtand it right, to procure the analogy from the Type to the Anti-type by way of letter and ſpirit, and ſignification, and as Circumciſion figures Baptiſm, ſo alſo the adjuncts of the Circumciſion ſhall ſignifie ſomething, ſpiritually, in the adherencies of Baptiſm: And therefore as Infants were circumciſed, ſo ſpiritually Infants ſhall be baptized, which is ſpiritually Circumciſion; for therefore Babes had the miniſtry of the Type, to ſignifie that we muſt when we give our names to Chriſt become *νῆστες καὶ νηπιά* children in malice, [*for unleſſe you become like one of theſe little ones, you cannot enter into the Kingdome of heaven*] ſaid our bleſſed Saviour, and then the Type is made compleat. And this ſeemes to have been the ſenſe of the Primitive Church; for in the Age next to the Apoſtles they gave to all baptized perſons milk and honey to repreſent to them their duty, that though in age and underſtanding they were men, yet they were Babes in Chriſt, and children in malice. But to inferre the ſenſe of the Pædo-baptiſts is ſo weak a manner of arguing that *Auſtin* whoſe device it was (and men uſe to bee in love with their own fancies) at the moſt pretended it but as probable and a meare conjecture.

And as ill ſucceſſe will they have with the other Arguments as with this; For from the action of Chriſts bleſſing Infants to inferre that they are to be baptized, proves nothing ſo much

L. 1. Ep. 8. ad
Fidum.

Numb. 11.

as that there is great want of better Arguments; The Conclusion would be with more probability derived thus: Christ blessed children and so dismissed them, but baptized them not, therefore Infants are not to be baptized: But let this be as weak as its enemy, yet that Christ did not baptize them, is an Argument sufficient that Christ hath other wayes of bringing them to heaven then by baptism, he passed his act of grace upon them by benediction and imposition of hands.

Numb. 15.

And therefore, although neither Infants nor any man in *paris naturalibus* can attain to a supernaturall end without the addition of some instrument or meanes of Gods appointing ordinarily and regularly, yet where God hath not appointed a Rule nor an Order, as in the case of Infants we contend he hath not, the Argument is invalid. And as we are sure that God hath not commanded Infants to be baptized; so we are sure God will doe them no injustice, nor damn them for what they cannot help.

Numb. 16.

And therefore, let them be pressed with all the inconveniences that are consequent to Original sinne, yet either it will not be laid to the charge of Infants, so as to be sufficient to condemn them; or if it could, yet the mercy and absolute goodnesse of God will secure them, if he takes them away before they can glorifie him with a free obedience; *Quid ergo festinat innocens aetas ad remissionem peccatorum*, was the Question of *Tertullian*, (*lib. de bapt.*) he knew no such danger from their Original guilt as to drive them to a laver of which in that Age of innocence they had no need, as he conceived. And therefore, there is no necessity of flying to the help of others, for tongue, and heart, and faith, and predipositions to baptism; for what need all this stirre? as Infants without their own consent, without any act of their own, and without any exteriour solemnity contracted the guilt of *Adams* sinne, and so are lyable to all the punishment which can with justice descend upon his posterity who are personally innocent; so Infants shall be restored without any solemnity or act of their own, or of any other men for them, by the second *Adam*, by the redemption of *Jesus Christ*, by his righteousness and mercies applyed either immediately, or how or when he shall be pleased to appoint. And so *Austin's* Argument

Argument will come to nothing without any need of God-fathers, or the faith of any body elle. And it is too narrow a conception of God Almighty, because he hath tyed us to the observation of the Ceremonies of his own institution, that therefore he hath tyed himselfe to it. Many thousand wayes there are by which God can bring any reasonable soule to himselfe: But nothing is more unreasonable, then because he hath tyed all men of years and discretion to this way, therefore we of our own heads shall carry Infants to him that way without his direction: The conceit is poore and low, and the action consequent to it is too bold and ventrous, *mysterium meum mihi & filiis domus mee*: Let him doe what he please to Infants, wee must not.

Only this is certain, that God hath as great care of Infants as of others, and because they have no capacity of doing such acts as may be in order to acquiring salvation, God will by his own immediate mercy bring them thither where he hath intended them; but to say that therefore he will doe it by an externall act and ministry, and that confin'd to a particular, viz. This Rite and no other, is no good Argument, unlesse God could not doe it without such meanes, or that he had said he would not: And why cannot God as well doe his mercies to Infants now immediately, as he did before the institution either of Circumcision or Baptism?

However, there is no danger that Infants should perish for want of this externall Ministry, much lesse for prevaricating Christs precept of *Nesci quis renatus fuerit, &c.* For first, the Water and the Spirit in this place signifie the same thing; and by Water is meant the effect of the Spirit, cleansing and purifying the Soule, as appears in its parallel place of Christ baptizing with the Spirit and with Fire. For although this was literally fulfilled in Pentecost, yet morally there is more in it, for it is the sign of the effect of the holy Ghost, and his productions upon the soule; and it was an excellency of our blessed Saviour's office, that he baptizes all that come to him with the holy Ghost and with fire; for so S. John preferring Christs mission and office before his own, tells the Jewes, not Christs Disciples, that Christ shall baptize them with Fire and the holy Spi-

rit, that is, *all that come to him*, as *John the Baptist* did with water, for so lies the Antithesis: And you may as well conclude that Infants must also passe through the fire as through the water. And that we may not think this a trick to elude the pressure of this place, *Peter* says the same thing; for when he had said that Baptism saves us, he addes by way of explication [*not the washing of the flesh, but the confidence of a good Conscience towards God*] plainly saying that it is not water, or the purifying of the body, but the cleansing of the Spirit, that does that which is supposed to be the effect of Baptism; and if our Saviour's exclusive negative be expounded by analogy to this of *Peter*, as certainly the other parallel instance must, and this may, then it will be so farre from proving the necessity of Infants Baptism, that it can conclude for no man that he is oblig'd to the Rite; and the doctrine of the Baptism is only to derive from the very words of Institution, and not be forced from words which were spoken before it was Ordain'd. But to let passe this advantage, and to suppose it meant of external Baptism, yet this no more inferres a necessity of Infant's Baptism, then the other words of Christ inferre a necessity to give them the holy Communion, *Nisi comederitis carnem filii hominis, & biberitis sanguinem, non introibitis in regnum cælorum*; and yet we doe not think these words sufficient Argument to communicate them; if men therefore will doe us justice, either let them give both Sacraments to Infants, as some Ages of the Church did, or neither. For the wit of man is not able to shew a disparity in the Sanction, or in the Energie of its expression. And therefore they were honest that understood the obligation to be parallel, and performed it accordingly, and yet because we say they were deceived in one instance, and yet the obligation (all the world cannot reasonably say but) is the same; they are as honest and as reasonable that doe neither. And since the Ancient Church did with an equall opinion of necessity give them the Communion, and yet men now adayes do not, why shall men be more burthened with a prejudice and a name of obloquy, for not giving the Infants one Sacrament more then they are disliked for not affording them the other. If *Anabaptist* shall be a name of disgrace, why shall not some other

other name be invented for them that deny to communicate Infants, which ſhall be equally diſgracefull, or elſe both the opinions ſignified by ſuch names, be accounted no diſparagement, but receive their eſtimate according to their truth?

Of which truth ſince we are now taking account from pre. *Numb. 19.*
 ſentences of Scripture, it is conſiderable that the diſcourſe of *S. Peter* which is pretended for the intitling Infants to the Promiſe of the holy Ghoſt, and by conſequence to Baptiſm; which is ſuppoſed to be its inſtrument and conveyance, is wholly a fancy, and hath in it nothing of certainty or demonſtration; and not much probability. For beſides that the thing it ſelfe is unreaſonable, and the holy Ghoſt works by the heighthning and improving our naturall faculties, and therefore is a promiſe that ſo concerns them as they are reaſonable creatures; and may have a title to it, in proportion to their nature, but no poſſeſſion or reception of it, till their faculties come into act; beſides this, I ſay, the words mentioned in *S. Peter's* Sermon (which are the only record of the promiſe) are interpreted upon a weak miſtake: The promiſe belongs to you and to your children; therefore Infants are actually receptive of it in that capacity. That's the Argument; but the reaſon of it is not yet diſcovered, nor ever will, for [*ſo you and your children*] is to you and your poſterity, to you & your children when they are of the ſame capacity, in which you are eſſentially receptive of the promiſe; But he that when ever the word [*children*] is uſed in Scripture ſhall by [*children*] underſtand Infants, muſt needs believe that in all *Iſrael* there were no men, but all were Infants; and if that had been true, it had beene the greater wonder they ſhould overcome the *Anakims* and beat the King of *Mouab*, and march ſo farre, and diſcourſe ſo well, for they were all called the children of *Iſrael*.

And for the Allegation of *S. Paul* that Infants are holy, if *Numb. 20.*
 their Parents be faithfull, it ſignifies nothing but that they are holy by designation, juſt as *Jeremy* and *John Baptiſt* were ſanctified in their Mothers womb, that is they were appointed and deſign'd for holy Miniſteries; but had not received the Promiſe of the Father the gift of the holy Ghoſt, for all that ſanctification; and juſt ſo the Children of Chriſtian Parents are ſanctified,

that is design'd to the service of Jesus Christ, and the future participation of the Promises.

Numb. 21.

And as the Promise appertaines not (for ought appears) to Infants in that capacity and consistence, but only by the title of their being reasonable creatures, and when they come to that act of which by nature they have the faculty; so if it did, yet Baptism is not the meanes of conveying the holy Ghost. For that which *Peter* sayes, *be baptized and ye shall receive the holy Ghost*, signifies no more then this: First be baptized and then by imposition of the Apostles hands (which was another mystery and rite,) ye shall receive the Promise of the Father: And this is nothing but an insinuation of the rite of confirmation, as is to this sense expounded by divers Ancient Authors, and in ordinary ministry the effect of it is not bestowed upon any unbaptized persons; for it is in order next after Baptism; and upon this ground *Peter's* Argument in the case of *Cornelius* was concluding enough *a majori ad minus*: Thus the holy Ghost was bestowed upon him and his Family, which gift by ordinary ministry was consequent to Baptism, (not as the effect is to the cause or to the proper instrument, but as a consequent is to an antecedent in a chaine of causes accidentally and by positive institution depending upon each other) God by that miracle did give testimony, that the persons of the men were in great dispositions towards Heaven, and therefore were to be admitted to those Rites, which are the ordinary inlets into the Kingdome of Heaven. But then from hence to argue that wherever there is a capacity of receiving the same grace, there also the same sign is to be ministred, and from hence to inferre Pædo-baptism, is an Argument very fallacious upon severall grounds. First, because Baptism is not the sign of the holy Ghost, but by another mystery it was conveyed ordinarily, and extraordinarily, it was conveyed independently from any mystery, and so the Argument goes upon a wrong supposition. Secondly, if the supposition were true, the proposition built upon it is false; for they that are capable of the same grace, are not alwayes capable of the same sign; for women under the Law of *Moses*, although they were capable of the righteousnesse of Faith, yet they were not capable of the sign of Circumcision: For God does not
alwayes

alwayes convey his graces in the ſame manner, but to ſome mediately, to others immediaty; and there is no better inſtance in the world of it, then the gift of the holy Ghoſt (which is the thing now inſtanc'd in this conteſtation) for it is certain in Scripture, that it was ordinarily given by impoſition of hands, and that after Baptiſm; (And when this came into an ordinary miniſtery, it was called by the Ancient Church Chriſm or Confirmation) but yet it was given ſometimes without impoſition of hands, as at Pentecoſt and to the Family of *Cornelius*; ſometimes before Baptiſm, ſometimes after, ſometimes in conjunction with it.

And after all this, leaſt theſe Arguments ſhould not ſcertaine their 'Cause', they fall on complaining againſt God, and will not be content with God, unleſſe they may baptize their Children, but take exceptions that God did more for the Children of the Jewes. But why ſo? Becauſe God made a Covenant with their Children actually as Infants, and conſign'd it by Circumciſion: Well; ſo he did with our children too in their proportion. He made a Covenant of ſpiritual Promiſes on his part, and ſpiritual and reaſonable ſervices on ours; and this pertains to Children when they are capable, but made with them as ſoon as they are alive, and yet not ſo as with the Jewes Babes; for as their rite conſign'd them actually, ſo it was a Nationall and temporall bleſſing and Covenant, as a ſeparation of them from the portion of the Nations; a marking them for a peculiar people; (and therefore while they were in the Wilderneſſe and ſeparate from the commixture of all people, they were not at all circumciſed) but as that rite did ſeale the righteouſneſſe of Faith, ſo by vertue of its adherency, and remanency in their fleſh; it did that work when the Children came to age. But in Chriſtian Infants the caſe is otherwiſe; for the new Covenant being eſtabliſh'd upon better Promiſes, is not only to better purpoſes, but alſo in diſtinct manner to be underſtood; when their ſpirits are as receptive of a ſpiritual act or impreſſe as the bodies of Jewiſh Children were of the ſign of Circumciſion, then it is to be conſign'd: But this buſineſſe is quickly at an end, by ſaying that God hath done no leſſe for ours, then for their Children; for hee will doe the

Numb. 22.

mercies of a Father and Creator to them ; and he did no more to the other ; but he hath done more to ours ; for he hath made a Covenant with them and built it upon Promiſes of the greateſt concernment ; he did not ſo to them : But then for the other part which is the maine of the Argument, that unleſſe this mercy be conſign'd by Baptiſm, as good not at all in reſpect of us, becauſe we want the comfort of it ; this is the greateſt vanity in the world : For when God hath made a Promiſe pertaining alſo to our Children (for ſo our Adverſaries contend, and we alſo acknowledge in its true ſenſe) ſhall not this Promiſe, this word of God be of ſufficient truth, certainty and efficacy to cauſe comfort, unleſſe we tempt God and require a ſign of him ? May not Chriſt ſay to theſe men as ſometime to the Jewes, *a wicked and adulterous generation ſeeketh after a ſign, but no ſign ſhall be given unto it* ? But the truth on't is, this Argument is nothing but a direct quarrelling with God Almighty.

Numb. 23.

Now ſince there is no ſtrength in the Doctrinall part, the praſiſe and precedents Apoſtolicall and Eccleſiaſticall, will be of leſſe concernment, if they were true as is pretended, becauſe actions Apoſtolicall are not alwayes Rules for ever ; it might be fit for them ſo doe it *pro loco & tempore* as divers others of their Inſtitutions, but yet no engagement paſt thence upon following Ages ; for it might be convenient at that time, in the new ſpring of Chriſtianity, and till they had engag'd a conſiderable party, by that meanes to make them parties againſt the Gentiles Superſtition, and by way of pre-occupation to aſcertain them to their own ſect when they came to be men ; or for ſome other reaſon not tranſmitted to us, becauſe the Queſtion of fact is ſelfe is not ſufficiently determin'd. For the inſinuation of that precept of baptizing *all Nations*, of which Children certainly are a part, does as little advantage as any of the reſt, becauſe other parallel expreſſions of Scripture doe determine and expound themſelves to a ſenſe that includes not all perſons abſolutely, but of a capable condition, as *adversum omnes gentes, & perſallito Das omnes nationes terra*, and divers more.

Numb. 24.

As for the conjecture concerning the Family of *Stephanus*,

at the beſt it is but a conjecture, and beſides that it is not prov'd that there were Children in the Family; yet if that were granted, it follows not that they were baptized, becauſe by [*whole Families*] in Scripture is meant all perſons of reaſon and age within the Family; for it is ſaid, of the Ruler at *Capernaum*, *Ioh. 4.* *that he believed and all his houſe*: Now you may alſo ſuppoſe that in his houſe were little Babes, that is likely enough, and you may ſuppoſe that they did believe too before they could underſtand, but that's not ſo likely; and then the Argument from baptizing of *Stephen's* houſehold may be allowed juſt as probable: But this is unman-like to build upon ſuch ſlight airy conjectures.

But Tradition by all means muſt ſupply the place of Scripture, and there is pretended a Tradition Apoſtolically, that Infants were baptized: But at this we are not much moved; For we who rely upon the written Word of God as ſufficient to eſta- bliſh all true Religion, do not value the Allegation of Traditions: And however the world goes, none of the Reformed Churches can pretend this Argument againſt this opinion, becauſe they who reject Tradition when tis againſt them, muſt not pretend it at all for them: But if wee ſhould allow the Topick to be good, yet how will it be verified? for ſo farre as it can yet appeare, it relies wholly upon the Teſtimony of *Origen*, for from him *Auſtin* had it. Now a Tradition Apoſtolically if it be not conſign'd with a fuller Teſtimony then of one perſon whom all after-Ages have condemn'd of many errors, will obtain ſo little reputation amongſt thoſe who know that things have upon greater Authority pretended to derive from the Apoſtles, and yet falſly, that it will be a great Argument that he is credulous and weak, that ſhall be determin'd by ſo weak probation in matters of ſo great concernment. And the truth of the buſineſſe is, as there was no command of Scripture to oblige Children to the ſuſception of it, ſo the neceſſity of Pædo-baptiſm was not determin'd in the Church till in the eighth Age after Chriſt, but in the year 418 in the *Milevian* Council, a Provinciall of *Africa*, there was a Canon made for Pædo-baptiſm; never till then! I grant it was practiz'd in *Africa* before that time, and they or ſome of them thought well of

it, and though that be no Argument for us to think ſo, yet none of them did ever before, pretend it to be neceſſary, none to have been a precept of the Goſpel. *S. Auſtin* was the firſt that ever preach'd it to be abſolutely neceſſary, and it was in his heat and anger againſt *Pelagius* who had warm'd and chafed him ſo in that Queſtion that it made him innovate in other doctrines poſſibly of more concernment then this. And that although this was practiſed anciently in *Africa*, yet that it was without an opinion of neceſſity, and not often there, nor at all in other places, we have the Teſtimony of a learned Pædo-baptiſt, *Ludovicus Vives*, who in his Annotations upon *S. Auſtin, De Civit. Dei. l. 1. c. 27.* affirms, *Neminem niſi adultum antiquis ſolere baptizari.*

Numb. 26.

But beſides that the Tradition cannot be proved to be Apoſtolically; we have very good evidence from Antiquity, that it was the opinion of the Primitive Church, that Infants ought not to be baptiz'd; and this is clear in the ſixth Canon of the Councell of *Neocaſarea*, The words are theſe, *οτι κυροῖσιν εν τῃ φωνῇ σου οποιος βέλῃ. ἡ δὲν ἡ κοινοῦ δ τίντων τῷ ταπεινῷ. δια τὸ ἕκαστῃ ἰδίῳ ὁ βαπτισμὸς ὅ ἐν τῷ ὁ νόμῳ δείκνυται.* The ſence is this, A woman with child may be baptized when ſhe pleaſe; For her Baptiſm concernes not the child. The reaſon of the connexion of the parts of that Canon is in the following words, becauſe every one in that Confeſſion is to give a demonstration of his own choyce and election: Meaning plainly, that if the Baptiſm of the Mother did alſo paſſe upon the child, it were not fit for a pregnant woman to receive Baptiſm, becauſe in that Sacrament there being a Confeſſion of Faith, which Confeſſion ſuppoſes underſtanding, and free choyce, it is not reaſonable the child ſhould be conſign'd with ſuch a myſtery, ſince it cannot doe any act of choyce or underſtanding: The Canon ſpeaks reaſon, and it intimates a practice which was abſolutely univerſall in the Church, of interrogating the Catechumens concerning the Articles of Creed: Which is one Argument that either they did not admit Infants to Baptiſm, or that they did prevaricate egregiouſly in asking Queſtions of them, who themſelves knew were not capable of giving anſwer.

And

And to supply their incapacity by the Answer of a God-father, is but the same unreasonableness acted with a worse circumstance: And there is no sensible account can be given of it; for that which some imperfectly murmur concerning stipulations civil perform'd by Tutors in the name of their Pupils, is an absolute vanity: For what if by positive Constitution of the Romans such solemnities of Law are required in all stipulations, and by indulgence are permitted in the case of a notable benefit accruing to Minors, must God be tyed, and Christian Religion transact her mysteries by proportion and compliance with the Law of the Romans? I know God might if he would have appointed Godfathers to give Answer in behalfe of the Children, and to be sidgeffors for them; but we cannot find any Authority or ground that he hath, and if he had, then it is to be supposed he would have given them Commission to have transacted the solemnity with better circumstances, and given Answers with more truth. For the Question is asked of believing in the present. And if the Godfathers answer in the name of the child, [*I doe believe*] it is notorious they speak false and ridiculously; for the Infant is not capable of believing, and if he were, he were also capable of dissenting, and how then doe they know his mind? And therefore *Tertullian* gives advice that the Baptism of Infants should bee deferred till they could give an account of their Faith, and the same also is the Councell of *Gregory Bishop of Nazianzum*, although he allows them to hasten it in case of necessity; for though his reason taught him what was fit, yet he was overborn with the practise and opinion of his Age, which began to beare too violently upon him, and yet in another place he makes mention of some to whom Baptism was not administered *sed in infanzia*; by reason of Infancy; To which if we adde that the Parents of *S. Austin*, *S. Hierom*, and *S. Ambrose* although they were Christian, yet did not baptise their children before they were 10 years of age, it will be very considerable in the example, and of great efficacy for destroying the supposed necessity or derivation from the Apostles.

But however, it is against the perpetuall analogy of Christs Doctrine to baptize Infants: For besides that Christ never gave

Numb. 27.
Quid ni necesse est (sic legit Franc. Iulius in notis ad Tertul.)
 sponsores etiam periculo ingri qui & ipsi permortalitatem destituere promissiones suas possint, & proveniunt malis indolis falli? *Tertul. lib. de baptis. cap. 18.*

Lib. de baptis. prope finem, cap. 18. itaque pro personarum cujusque conditione ac dispositione, etiam reate, cunctatio baptismi utilis est, precipue tamen circa parvulos. Fiant Christiani cum Christum nosse poterint.
Orat. 40. quæst in S. Baptisma.

Numb. 28.

Mar. 16.

any precept to baptize them, nor ever himselfe nor his Apostles (that appears) did baptize any of them; All that either he or his Apostles said concerning it, requires such previous dispositions to Baptism of which Infants are not capable, and these are Faith and Repentance: And not to instance in those innumerable places that require Faith before this Sacrament, there needs no more but this one saying of our blessed Saviour, *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned*; plainly thus, Faith and Baptism in conjunction will bring a man to heaven; but if he have not Faith, Baptism shall doe him no good. So that if Baptism be necessary then, so is Faith, and much more; for want of Faith damnes absolutely; it is not said so of the want of Baptism. Now if this decretory sentence be to be understood of persons of age, and if Children by such an Answer (which indeed is reasonable enough) be excused from the necessity of Faith, the want of which regularly does damne, then it is sortish to say the same incapacity of reason and Faith shall not excuse from the actuall suscepcion of Baptism, which is lesse necessary, and to which Faith and many other acts are necessary predispositions when it is reasonably and humanely received. The Conclusion is, that Baptism is also to be deferr'd till the time of Faith: And whether Infants have Faith or no, is a Question to be disputed by persons that care not how much they say, nor how little they prove.

Numb. 29.

1. Personall and actuall Faith they have none; for they have no acts of understanding; and besides how can any man know that they have, since he never saw any sign of it, neither was he told so by any one that could tell? 2. Some say they have imputative Faith; but then so let the Sacrament be too, that is, if they have the Parents Faith or the Churches, then so let Baptism be imputed also by derivation from them, that as in their Mothers womb, and while they hang on their breasts, they live upon their Mothers nourishment, so they may upon the Baptism of their Parents or their Mother the Church. For since Faith is necessary to the suscepcion of Baptism (and they themselves confesse it by striving to finde out new kinds of Faith to dawb the matter up) such as the Faith is, such must be the Sacrament:

Sacrament: for there is no proportion between an actual Sacrament and an imputative Faith, this being in immediate and necessary order to that: And whatsoever can be said to take off from the necessity of actual Faith, all that and much more may be said to excuse from the actual susception of Baptism. 3. The first of these devices was that of *Luther* and his Scholars, the second of *Calvin* and his; and yet there is a third device which the Church of *Rome* teaches, and that is, that Infants have habitually Faith: But who told them so? how can they prove it? what Revelation, or reason teaches any such thing? Are they by this habitude so much as disposed to an actual belief without a new master? Can an Infant sent into a *Mahometan* Province be more confident for Christianity when he comes to be a man, then if he had not been baptized? Are there any acts precedent, concomitant or consequent to this pretended habit? This strange invention is absolutely without art, without Scripture, Reason or Authority: But the men are to be excused unless there were a better; But for all these stratagems, the Argument now alleged against the Baptism of Infants is demonstrative and unanswerable.

To which also this consideration may be added, that if Baptism be necessary to the salvation of Infants, upon whom is the imposition laid? To whom is the command given? to the Parents or to the Children? not to the Children, for they are not capable of a Law; not to the Parents, for then God hath put the salvation of innocent Babes into the power of others; and Infants may be damn'd for their Fathers carelessness or malice. It follows that it is not necessary at all to be done to them, to whom it cannot be prescribed as a Law, and in whose behalf it cannot be reasonably intrusted to others with the appendant necessity; and if it be not necessary, it is certain it is not reasonable, and most certain it is nowhere in terms prescribed, and therefore it is to be presumed, that it ought to be understood and administered according as other precepts are with reference to the capacity of the subject, and the reasonableness of the thing.

For I consider, that the baptizing of Infants does rush us upon such inconveniences which in other Questions we avoid like Rocks, which will appear if we Discourse thus.

H h

Either

Numb. 30.

Numb. 31.

Either Baptiſm produces ſpiritually effects, or it produces them not: If it produces not any, why is ſuch contention about it, what are we the nearer heaven if we are baptized? and if it be neglected, what are we the farther off? But if (as without all peradventure all the *Pado-baptiſts* will ſay) Baptiſm does doe a work upon the ſoule, producing ſpiritually benefits and advantages, theſe advantages are produc'd by the externall work of the Sacrament alone, or by that as it is help'd by the co-operation and diſpoſitions of the *ſuſcipient*.

If by the externall work of the Sacrament alone, how does this differ from the *opus operatum* of the Papiſts, ſave that it is worſe? for they ſay the Sacrament does not produce its effect but in a *ſuſcipient* diſpoſed by all requiſites and due preparatives, of piety, faith, and repentance; though in a ſubject ſo diſpoſed, they ſay the Sacrament by its own virtue does it; but this opinion ſayes it does it of it ſelfe without the help, or ſo much as the coexiſtence of any condition but the meate reception.

But if the Sacrament does not doe its work alone, but *per modum recipientis* according to the diſpoſitions of the ſuſcipient, then becauſe Infants can neither hinder it, nor doe any thing to further it, it does them no benefit at all. And if any man runs for ſuccour to that exploded *χρηστυλὸς*, that Infants have Faith, or any other inſpir'd habite of I know not what or how, we deſire no more advantage in the world, then that they are conſtrained to an answer without Revelation, againſt reaſon, common ſenſe, and all the experience in the world.

The ſumme of the Argument in ſhort, is this though under another representation.

Either Baptiſm is a meate Ceremony, or it impliyes a Duty on our part. If it be a Ceremony only, how does it ſanctifie us, or make the commens thereunto perfect? If it impliyes a Duty on our part, how then can Children receive it, who cannot doe duty at all?

And indeed, this way of Miniſtration makes Baptiſm to be wholly an outward duty, a work of the Law, a carnall Ordinance, it makes us adhere to the letter, without regard of the Spirit, to be ſatisfied with ſhadowes, to return to bondage,

to relinquish the mysteriouseſſe, the ſubſtance and Spirituality of the Goſpel. Which Argument is of ſo much the more conſideration, becauſe under the Spirituall Covenant, or the Goſpel of Grace, if *the myſtery* goes not before the *Symbol* (which it does when the Symbols are Seales and Conſignations of the Grace, as it is ſaid the Sacraments are) yet it alwayes accompani- es it, but never followes in order of time: And this is clear in the perpetuall analogy of holy Scripture.

For Baptiſm is never propounded, mentioned or enjoin'd as a meanes of remiſſion of finnes, or of eternall life, but ſome- thing of duty, choyce and ſanctity is joyn'd with it, in order to production of the end ſo mentioned, *Know ye not that as many as are baptized into Chriſt Jeſus, are baptized into his death?* Roan. 6 3. There is the myſtery and the Symbol together, and declared to bee perpetually united, *ὅτι ἡμεῖς ἐβαπτίσμεθα*. All of us who were baptized into one, were baptized into the other; Not only into the Name of Chriſt, but into his death alſo: But the meaning of this as it is explained in the following words of S. Paul, makes much for our purpoſe: For to bee baptized into his death, ſignifies *to be buried with him in Baptiſm, that as Chriſt roſe from the dead, wee alſo ſhould walk in newneſſe of life*: That's the full myſtery of Baptiſm; For being baptized into his death, or which is all one in the next words, *ἐν ὁμοιότητι τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ* Verſ. 4. into the likenesse of his death, cannot goe alone; if we be ſo plan- ted into Chriſt, we ſhall be partakers of his Reſurrection, and that is not here inſtanced in precise reward, but in *exact Duty*, for all this is nothing but *crucifixion of the old man, a destroying the* Verſ. 5. *body of ſinne, that wee no longer ſerve ſinne.* Verſ. 6.

This indeed is truly to be baptized both in the *Symbol* and the *Mystery*: Whatſoever is leſſe then this, is but the *Symbol* only, a *mere Ceremony*, an *opus operatum*, a dead letter, an empty ſhadow, an inſtrument without an agent to manage; or force to actuate it.

Plainer yet: *Whoſoever are baptized into Chriſt have put on Chriſt, have put on the new man*: But to put on this new-man, is *to be formed in righteouſneſſe, and holineſſe, and truth*: This whole Argument is the very words of S. Paul: The Major propoſition is dogmatically determin'd, *Gal. 3. 27.* The Minor in

1 Pet. 3. 21.

Ephes. 4. 24. The Conclusion then is obvious, that they who are not formed new in *righteouſneſſe, and holineſſe, and truth*, they who remaining in the preſent incapacities cannot *walk in newneſſe of life*, they have not been *baptized into Chriſt*, and then they have but one member of the diſtinction, uſed by *S. Peter*, they have that Baptiſm *which is a putting away the filth of the fleſh*; but they have not that Baptiſm *which is the answer of a good conſcience towards God*, which is the onely Baptiſm that *saves us*: And this is the caſe of children; And then the caſe is thus.

As Infants by the force of nature cannot put themſelves into a ſupernaturall condition, (and therefore ſay the *Pado-baptiſts*, they need Baptiſm to put them into it:) ſo if they be baptized before the uſe of reaſon, before the *works of the Spirit*, before the operations of Grace, before they can throw off the *works of darkneſſe*, and live in *righteouſneſſe and newneſſe of life*, they are never the nearer: From the paines of Hell they ſhall be ſaved by the mercies of God, and their own innocence, though they die in *puris naturalibus*, and Baptiſm will carry them no further. For that *Baptiſm that ſaves us*, is not the onely *washing with water*, of which onely, Children are capable, *but the answer of a good conſcience towards God*, of which they are not capable till the uſe of reaſon, till they know to chuſe the good and reſuſe the evil.

And from thence I conſider anew, That all vowes made by perſons under others Names, ſtipulations made by *Minors*, are not valid till they by a ſupervening act after they are of ſufficient age doe ratifie them. Why then may not Infants as well make the vow *de novo*, as *de novo* ratifie that which was made for them *ab antiquo* when they come to years of choice? If the *Infant* vow be invalid till the *Manly* confirmation, why were it not as good they ſtaid to make it till that time, before which if they doe make it, it is to no purpoſe? This would bee conſidered.

Vide. Eſtimum in præſat. ad Annotation. in Matth.

Numb. 32.

And in Conclusion, Our way is the the ſurer way, for not to baptize Children till they can give an account of their Faith, is the moſt proportionable to an act of reaſon and humanity, and it can have no danger in it: For to ſay that Infants may be damned for

for want of Baptiſm, (a thing which is not in their power to acquire, they being perſons not yet capable of a Law) is to aſſert that of God which we dare not ſay of any wiſe and good man. Certainly it is much derogatory to Gods Juſtice and a plaine defiance to the infinite reputation of his goodneſſe.

And therefore, who ever will pertinaciouſly perſiſt in this opinion of the Pædo-baptiſts and praſe it accordingly, they pollute the blood of the everlaſting Teſtament, they diſhonour and make a pageantry of the Sacrament, they ineffectually repreſent a ſepulture into the death of Chriſt, and pleaſe themſelves in a ſign without effect, making Baptiſm like the fig-tree in the Goſpel, full of leaves but no fruit; And they invoke the holy Ghoſt in vaine, doing as if one ſhould call upon him to illuminate a ſtone, or a tree.

Thus farre the *Anabaptiſts* may argue, and men have Diſputed againſt them with ſo much weakneſſe and confidence, that they have been encouraged in their error * more by the accidentall advantages we have given them by our weak arguing, then by any truth of their cauſe, or excellency of their wit. But the uſe I make of it as to our preſent Queſtion is this: That ſince there is no direct impiety in the opinion, nor any that is apparently conſequent to it, and they with ſo much probability doe or may pretend to true perſwaſion, they are with all meanes, Chriſtian, faire, and humane, to be redargued, or inſtructed, but if they cannot be perſwaded they muſt be left to God, who knowes every degree of every mans underſtanding, all his weakneſſes and ſtrengths, what impreſſe each Argument makes upon his Spirit, and how unrefiſtible every reaſon is, and he alone judges his innocency and ſincerity; and for the Queſtion, I think there is ſo much to be pretended againſt that, which I believe to be the truth, that there is much more truth then evidence on our ſide, and therefore we may be confident as for our own particulars, but not too forward peremptorily to preſcribe to others, much leſſe damne, or to kill, or to perſecute them that only in this particular diſagree.

Numb. 33.

Numb. 34.

* ἐν ἐν τοῖς
ἐαυτῶν δό-
μασι τῶν ἰσχυ-
ρῶν, ἀλλ' ἐν
τοῖς ὑπελείπον-
σιν τοῦ
τῶν ὑπὸ τῶν
ὡς *Naxianzen*
obſerves of
the caſe of the
Church in his
time.

SECT. XIX.

That there may be no Toleration of Doctrines inconſiſtent with piety or the publique good.

Numb. 1.

L. 7. Siſtomat.

BUT then for their other capitall Opinion, with all its branches, that it is not lawfull for Princes to put Malefactors to death, nor to take up defensive Armes, nor to miniſter an Oath, nor to contend in judgement, it is not to be diſputed with ſuch liberty as the former: For although it bee part of that Doctrine which *Clement Alexandrinus* ſayes was delivered *per ſecretam traditionem Apoſtolorum*, *Non licere Chriſtianis conſendere in Iudicio, nec coram gentibus, nec coram ſanctis, & perfectum non debere Iurare*; and the other part ſeemes to be warranted by the eleventh Canon of the *Nicene* Councell, which enjoynes penance to them that take Armes after their converſion to Chriſtianity; yet either theſe Authorities are to be ſlighted, or be made receptive of any interpretation rather then the Common-wealth be diſarmed of its neceſſary ſupports, and all Lawes made ineffectuall and impertinent: For the intereſt of the republique, and the well being of bodies politick is not to depend upon the nicety of our imaginations, or the fancies of any peeviſh or miſtaken Prieſts, and there is no reaſon a Prince ſhould ask *John-a-Brunck*, whether his underſtanding will give him leave to raign, and be a King: Nay, ſuppoſe there were divers places of Scripture which did ſeemingly reſtraine the Politicall uſe of the Sword, yet ſince the avoyding a perſonall inconvenience, hath by all men been accounted ſufficient reaſon to expound Scripture to any ſenſe rather then the literall, which inferres an unreaſonable inconvenience, (and therefore the *pulling out an eye*, and the *cutting off a hand*, is expounded by mortifying a vice, and killing a criminall habit) much rather muſt the Allegations againſt the power of the Sword endure any ſenſe rather then it ſhould be thought that Chriſtianity ſhould deſtroy that which is the only inſtrument of Juſtice, the reſtraint of vice and ſupport of bodies politick. It is certain that Chriſt and his Apoſtles, and Chriſtian Religion did

did comply with the moſt abſolute Government, and the moſt imperiall that was then in the world; and it could not have been at all indured in the world if it had not; for indeed the world it ſelfe could not laſt in regular and orderly communities of men, but be a perpetuall confuſion, if Princes and the Supreme Power in Bodies Politick, were not armed with a coercive power to puniſh Malefactors: The publike neceſſity, and univerſall experience of all the world convinces thoſe men of being moſt unreaſonable, that make ſuch pretences which deſtroy all Lawes, and all Communities, and the bands of civil Societies, and leave it arbitrary to every vaine or vicious perſon whether men ſhall be ſafe, or Lawes be eſtabliſhed, or a Murderer hang'd, or Princes Rule. So that in this caſe men are not ſo much to Diſpute with particular Arguments, as to conſider the Interſt and concernment of Kingdomes and Publike Societies: For the Religion of Jeſus Chriſt is the beſt eſtabliſher of the felicity of private perſons, and of publike Communities; it is a Religion that is prudent and innocent; humane, and reaſonable, and brought infinite advantages to mankind, but no inconvenience, nothing that is unnaturall, or unſociable, or unjuſt. And if it be certain that this world cannot be governed without Lawes, and Lawes without a compulſory ſignifie nothing, then it is certain, that it is no good Religion that teaches Doctrines whoſe conſequents will deſtroy all Government; and therefore it is as much to be rooted out; as any thing that is the greateſt peſt and nuisance to the publick intereſt: And that we may gueſſe at the purpoſes of theſe men, and the inconvenience of ſuch Doctrines; theſe men that did firſt intend by their Doctrine to diſarme all Princes, and bodies Politick, did themſelves take up armes to eſtabliſh their wild, and impious fancie; and indeed that Prince or Commonwealth that ſhould be perſwaded by them, would be expoſed to all the inſolencies of forraingners, and all mutinies of the teachers themſelves, and the Governours of the people could not doe that duty they owe to their people of proteſting them from the rapine and malice which will be in the world as long as the world is. And therefore, here they are to be reſtrained from preaching ſuch Doctrines, if they mean to preſerve their

Cicero de
ſenectute.

their Government, and the neceſſity of the thing will juſtifie the lawfulneſſe of the thing: If they think it to themſelves, that cannot be helped; ſo long it is innocent as much as concerns the Publick; but if they preach it, they may be accounted Authors of all the conſequent inconveniences, and puniſht accordingly: *No Doctrines that deſtroys Government is to be endured*; For although thoſe Doctrines are not alwayes good that ſerve the private ends of Princes, or the ſecret deſignes of State, which by reaſon of ſome accidents or imperfections of men may be promoted by that which is falſe and pretending, yet no Doctrine can be good that does not comply with the formality of Government it ſelfe, and the well being of bodies Politick; *Augur cum eſſet Cato, dicere auſus eſt, optimis auſpiciis ea geri qua pro Reipub. ſalute gererentur; qua contra Rempub. fierent contra auſpicia fieri*: Religion is to meliorate the condition of a people, not to doe it diſadvantage, and therefore thoſe Doctrines that inconvenience the Publick, are no parts of good Religion; *ut Reſpub. ſalva ſit*, is a neceſſary conſideration in the permiſſion of Prophecyings; for according to the true, ſolid, and prudent ends of the Republick, ſo is the Doctrine to be permitted or reſtrained, and the men that preach it according as they are good Subjects, and right Common-wealths men: For Religion is a thing ſuperinduced to temporall Government, and the Church is an addition of a capacity to a Common-wealth, and therefore is in no ſenſe to diſſerve the neceſſity and juſt intereſts of that to which it is ſuper-added for its advantage and conſervation.

Numb. 2.

And thus by a proportion to the Rules of theſe inſtances, all their other Doctrines are to have their judgement, as concerning Toleration or reſtraint; for all are either ſpeculative, or practicall, they are conſiſtent with the Publick ends or inconſiſtent, they reach impiety or they are innocent, and they are to be permitted or rejected accordingly. For in the Queſtion of Toleration, the foundation of Faith, good life and Government is to be ſecured; in all others caſes, the former conſiderations are effectuall.

SECT. XX.

How farre the Religion of the Church of Rome is Tolerable.

BUT now concerning the Religion of the Church of *Rome* Numb. 1. (which was the other instance I promised to consider) we will proceed another way, and not consider the truth or falsity of the Doctrines; for that is not the best way to determine this Question concerning permitting their Religion or Assemblies; because that a thing is not true, is not Argument sufficient to conclude that he that believes it true is not to be endured; but we are to consider what inducements there are that possess the understanding of those men; whether they be reasonable and innocent, sufficient to abuse or perswade wise and good men, or whether the Doctrines be commenc'd upon designe, and manag'd with impiety, and then have effects not to be endured.

And here first, I consider that those Doctrines that have had long continuance and possession in the Church, cannot easily be supposed in the present Professors to be a design, since they have received it from so many Ages, and it is not likely that all Ages should have the same purposes, or that the same Doctrine should serve the severall ends of divers Ages. But however, long prescription is a prejudice, oftentimes so insupportable, that it cannot with many Arguments be retrench'd, as relying upon these grounds, that truth is more ancient then falsehood, that God would not for so many Ages forsake his Church, and leave her in an error; that whatsoever is new, is not only suspicious, but false; which are suppositions, pious and plausible enough. And if the Church of *Rome* had communicated Infants so long as she hath prayed to Saints, or baptized Infants, the communicating would have been believed with as much confidence, as the other Articles are, and the dissentients with as much impatience rejected. But this consideration is to be enlarg'd upon all those particulars, which as they are apt to abuse the persons of the men and amuse their understandings,

ſo they are instruments of their excuse, and by making their errors to be invincible, and their opinions, though false, yet not criminal, make it also to be an effect of reason and charity, to permit the men a liberty of their Conscience. and let them answer to God for themselves and their own opinions : Such as are the beauty and splendor of their Church ; their pompous Service ; the statelineſſe and ſolemnity of the Hierarchy ; their name of Catholick, which they ſuppoſe their own due, and to concern no other Sect of Chriſtians ; the Antiquity of many of their Doctrines ; the continuall Succeſſion of their Biſhops ; their immediate derivation from the Apoſtles ; their Title to ſucceed S. Peter ; the ſuppoſall and pretence of his perſonall Prerogatives ; the advantages which the conjunction of the Imperiall Seat with their Epiſcopall hath brought to that Sea ; the flattering expreſſions of minor Biſhops, which by being old Records, have obtain'd credibility ; the multitude and variety of people which are of their perſwaſion ; apparent conſent with Antiquity in many Ceremonials which other Churches have rejected ; and a pretended, and ſometimes an apparent conſent with ſome elder Ages in many matters doctrinall ; the advantage which is derived to them by entertaining ſome perſonall opinions of the Fathers, which they with infinite clamours ſee to bee cryed up to be a Doctrine of the Church of that time ; The great conſent of one part with another in that which moſt of them aſſay to be *de ſide* ; the great differences which are commene'd amongſt their Adverſaries, abuſing the Liberty of Propheſying unto a very great licentiousneſſe ; their happineſſe of being instruments in converting divers Nations ; the advantages of Monarchicall Government, the benefit of which as well as the inconveniences (which though they ſeele they conſider not) they daily doe enjoy ; the piety and the aſterity of their Religious Orders of men and women ; the ſingle life of their Priests and Biſhops ; the riches of their Church ; the ſeverity of their Faſts and their exterior obſervances ; the great reputation of their firſt Biſhops for Faith and ſanctity ; the known holineſſe of ſome of thoſe perſons whoſe Inſtitutes the Religious Perſons pretend to imitate ; their Miracles falſe or true, ſubſtantiall or imaginary ; the

caſualties,

casualties and accidents that have hapned to their Adverſaries, which being chances of humanity are attributed to ſeverall cauſes according as the fancies of men and their Interests are pleaſed or ſatisfied; the temporall felicity of their Profeſſors; the oblique arts & indirect proceedings of ſome of thoſe who departed from them; and amongst many other things, the names of Heretick and Schiſmatick, which they with infinite pertinacy faſten upon all that diſagree from them; Theſe things and divers others may very eaſily perſwade perſons of much reaſon and more piety, to retain that which they know to have been the Religion of their fore-Fathers, which had actuall poſſeſſion and ſeizure of mens underſtandings before the oppoſite profeſſions had a name; And ſo much the rather becauſe Religion hath more advantages upon the fancy and affections, then it hath upon Philoſophy and ſevere diſcourſes, and therefore is the more eaſily perſwaded upon ſuch grounds as theſe, which are more apt to amuſe then to ſatiſfie the underſtanding.

Secondly, If we conſider the Doctrines themſelves, we ſhall finde them to be ſuperſtructures ill built, and worſe manag'd, but yet they keep the foundation, they build upon God in Jeſus Chriſt, they profeſſe the Apoſtles Creed, they retain Faith and Repentance as the ſupporters of all our hopes of Heaven, and believe many more truths then can be proved to be of ſimple and originall neceſſity to ſalvation: And therefore all the wiſeſt Perſonages of the adverſe party allowed to them poſſibility of ſalvation, whiſt their errors are not faults of their will, but weakneſſes and deceptions of the underſtanding. So that there is nothing in the *foundation of Faith*, that can reaſonably hinder them to be permitted: The foundation of Faith ſtands ſecure enough for all their vaine and unhandſome ſuperſtructures.

But then on the other ſide, if we take account of their Doctrines as they relate to good life, or are conſiſtent or inconſiſtent with civill Government, we ſhall have other conſiderations.

Thirdly, For I conſider, that many of their Doctrines doe accidentally teach or lead to ill life, and it will appeare to any

Numb. 3.

Numb. 4.

man that considers the result of these propositions : Attrition (which is a low and imperfect degree of sorrow for sin, or as others say a sorrow for sinne commenc'd upon any reason of temporall hope, or feare or desire or any thing else) is a sufficient disposition for a man in the Sacrament of penance to receive absolution, and be justified before God, by taking away the guilt of all his sinnes, and the obligation to eternall paines. So that already the feare of Hell is quite removed upon conditions so easie, that many men take more paines to get a goat, then by this Doctrine we are oblig'd to, for the curing and acquitting all the greatest sinnes of a whole life, of the most vicious person in the world : And but that they affright their people with a feare of Purgatory, or with the severity of Penances in case they will not venter for Purgatory (for by their Doctrine they may chuse or refuse either) there would be nothing in their Doctrine or Discipline to impede and slacken their proclivity to sinne; but then they have as easy a cure for that too, with a little more charge sometimes, but most commonly with lesse trouble: For there are so many confraternities, so many privileged Churches, Altars, Monasteries, Cœmeteries, Offices, Festivals, and so free a concession of Indulgences appendant to all these, and a thousand fine devices to take away the feare of Purgatory, to commute or expiate Penances, that in no sect of men, doe they with more ease and cheapnesse reconcile a wicked life with the hopes of heaven, then in the Roman Communion.

Numb. 5.

And indeed if men would consider things upon their true grounds, the Church of *Rome* should be more reprov'd upon Doctrines that inferre ill life, then upon such as are contrariant to Faith. For false superstructures doe not alwayes destroy Faith; but many of the Doctrines they teach if they were prosecuted to the utmost issue would destroy good life: And therefore my quarrell with the Church of *Rome* is greater and stronger upon such points which are not usually consider'd, then it is upon the ordinary disputes, which have to no very great purpose so much disturb'd Christendome: And I am more scandaliz'd at her for teaching the sufficiency of Attrition in the Sacrament, for indulging Penances so frequently, for remitting

all

all Discipline, for making so great a part of Religion to consist in externalls and Ceremonialls, for putting more force and Energy and exacting with more severity the commandments of men then the precepts of Justice, and internall Religion: Lastly, besides many other things, for promising heaven to persons after a wicked life upon their impertinent cryes and Ceremonialls transacted by the Priest and the dying Person: I confesse I with the zeale of Christendome were a little more active against these and the like Doctrines, and that men would write and live more earnestly against them then as yet they have done.

But then what influence this just zeale is to have upon the persons of the Professors is another consideration: For as the Pharisees did preach well and lived ill, and therefore were to be heard not imitated: So if these men live well though they teach ill, they are to be imitated not heard: their Doctrines by all meanes, Christian and humane, are to be discountenanc'd, but their persons tolerated *entenus*; their Profession and Decrees to be rejected and condemn'd, but the persons to be permitted, because by their good lives they confute their Doctrines, that is, they give evidence, that they think no evill to be consequent to such opinions, and if they did, that they live good lives, is argument sufficient that they would themselves call the first stone against their own opinions, if they thought them guilty of such misdemeanours.

Numb. 6.

Fourthly, But if we consider their Doctrines in relation to Government, and Publick societies of men, then if they prove faulty, they are so much the more intolerable by how much the consequents, are of greater danger and malice: Such Doctrines as these, The Pope may dispence with all oathes taken to God or man: He may absolve Subjects from their Allegiance to their naturall Prince: Faith is not to be kept with Hereticks, Hereticall Princes may be slaine by their Subjects. These Propositions are so deprett, and doe so immediately communicate with matter, and the interests of men, that they are of the same consideration with matters of fact, and are to be handled accordingly. To other Doctrines ill life may be consequent; but the connexion of the antecedent and the consequent is not (peradventure) perceiv'd or acknowledged by him that believe,

Numb. 7.

the opinion with no greater confidence then he diſavowes the effect, and iſſue of it. But in theſe, the ill effect is the direct profeſſion and purpoſe of the opinion, and therefore the man and the mans opinion is to be dealt withall, juſt as the matter of fact is to be judg'd; for it is an immediate, a perceiv'd, a direct event, and the very purpoſe of the opinion. Now theſe opinions are a direct overthrow to all humane ſociety, and mutuall commerce, a deſtruction of Government, and of the lawes and duty and ſubordination which we owe to Princes; and therefore thoſe men of the Church of *Rome* that doe hold them, and preach them, cannot pretend to the excuſes of innocent opinions, and hearty perſuaſion, to the weakneſſe of humanity, and the difficulty of things; for God hath not left thoſe truths which are neceſſary for conſervation of publike ſocieties of men, ſo intricate and obſcure, but that every one that is honeſt and deſirous to underſtand his duty, will certainly know that no Chriſtian truth deſtroies a mans being ſociable and a member of the body Politick, co-operating to the conſervation of the whole as well as of it ſelfe. However, if it might happen that men ſhould ſincerely erre in ſuch plaine matters of fact (for there are fooles enough in the world) yet if he hold his peace, no man is to perſecute or puniſh him, for then it is meare opinion which comes not under Politicall Cogniſance, that is, that Cogniſance which onely can puniſh corporally; but if he preaches it, he is actually a Traytor, or Seditious, or Author of Perjury, or a deſtroyer of humane Society, reſpectively to the nature of the Doctrines; and the preaching ſuch Doctrines cannot claime the priviledge and immunity of a meare opinion, becauſe it is as much matter of fact, as any the actions of his diſciples and confidants, and therefore in ſuch caſes is not to be permitted, but judg'd according to the nature of the effect it hath or may have upon the actions of men.

Numb. 8.

Fifthly: But laſtly, In matters mearely ſpeculative, the caſe is wholly altered, becauſe the body Politick which only may lawfully uſe the ſword, is not a competent Judge of ſuch matters which have not direct influence upon the body Politick, or upon the lives and manners of men as they are parts of a Community (not but that Princes or Judges Temporall may have

have as much ability as others, but by reason of the incompetency of the Authority;) And Gallio spoke wisely, when he discour'd thus to the Jewes, *If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdnesse o ye Jewes, reason would that I should hear you; But if it be a question of words, and names, and of your Law, look ye to it, for I will be no Judge of such matters*: The man spoke excellent reason; for the Cognisance of these things did appertain to men of the other robe: but the Ecclesiasticall power, which only is competent to take notice of such questions, is not of capacity to use the Temporall sword or corporall inflictions: The meare doctrines and opinions of men are things Spirituall, and therefore not Cognoscible by a temporall Authority; and the Ecclesiasticall Authority, which is to take Cognisance is it selfe so Spirituall, that it cannot inflict any punishment corporall.

And it is not enough to say that when the Magistrate restraines the preaching such opinions, if any man preaches them he may be punished (and then it is not for his opinion but his disobedience that he is punish'd) for the temporall power ought not to restraints Prophecying, where the publick peace and interest is not certainly concern'd. And therefore it is not sufficient to excuse him, whose Law in that case being by an incompetent power made a scruple where there was no sinne.

And under this consideration, come very many Articles of the Church of *Rome*, which are wholly speculative, which doe not derive upon practise, which begin in the understanding and rest there, and have no influence upon life and government, but very accidentally, and by a great many removes, and therefore are to be considered only so farre as to guide men in their perswasions, but have no effect upon the persons of men, their bodies, or their temporall condition: I instance in two; Prayer for the dead, and the Doctrine of Transubstantion, these two to be instead of all the rest.

For the first, This Discourse is to suppose it false, and we are to direct our proceedings accordingly: And therefore I shall not need to urge with how many faire words and gay pretences, this Doctrine is set off, apt either to couzen or instruct the conscience.

ſcience of the wiſeſt according as it is true or falſe reſpective-ly. But we finde (ſayes the Romanist) in the Hiſtory of the *Maccabees*, that the Jewes did pray and make offerings for the dead (which alſo appeares by other Teſtimonies, and by their forme of prayers ſtill extant which they uſed in the Captivity) it is very conſiderable, that ſince our bleſſed Saviour did reprove all the evill Doctrines and Traditions of the Scribes and Phariſees, and did argue concerning the dead and the Reſurrection againſt the Sadducees, yet he ſpoke no word againſt this publick practice, but leſt it as he found it, which he who came to declare to us all the will of his Father would not have done, if it had not been innocent, pious and full of charity. To which by way of conſociation, if we adde that *S. Paul* did pray for *Onesiphorus*, That God would ſhew him a mercy in that day, that is, according to the ſtile of the New Teſtament, the day of Judgement: The reſult will be, that although it be probable, that *Onesiphorus* at that time was dead (becauſe in his ſalutations he ſalutes his houſhold, without naming him who was the *Major domo*, againſt his cuſtome of ſalutations in other places:) Yet beſides this, the prayer was for ſuch a bleſſing to him whoſe demonſtration and reception could not be but after death; which implies clearly, that then there is a need of mercy, and by conſequence the dead people even to the day of Judgement incluſively are the ſubject of a miſery, the object of Gods mercy, and therefore fit to be commemorated in the duties of our piety and charity, and that we are to recommend their condition to God, not only to give them more glory, in the reunion, but to pity them to ſuch purpoſes in which they need; which becauſe they are not revealed to us in particular, it hinders us not in recommending the perſons in particular to Gods mercy, but ſhould rather excite our charity and devotion: For it being certaine that they have a need of mercy, and it being uncertain how great their need is, it may concern the prudence of charity to be the more earneſt as not knowing the greatneſſe of their neceſſity.

Numb. 12.

And if there ſhould be any uncertainty in theſe Arguments, yet its having been the univerſall practice of the Church of God in all places, and in all Ages till within theſe hundred
yeares,

yeares, is a very great inducement for any member of the Church to believe that in the first Traditions of Christianity, and the Institutions Apostolicall, there was nothing delivered against this practise, but very much to insinuate or enjoyn it; because the practise of it was at the first, and was universall. And if any man shall doubt of this, he shewes nothing but that hee is ignorant of the Records of the Church, it being plaine in *Tertullian* and *S. * Cyprian* (who were the eldest Writers of the Latine Church) that in their times it was *ab antiquo*, the custome of the Church to pray for the Soules of the Faithfull departed, in the dreadfull mysteries: And it was an Institution Apostolicall (sayes one of them) and so transmitted to the following Ages of the Church, and when once it began upon slight and discontent to be contested against by *Aerius*, the man was presently condemn'd for a Heretick, as appears in *Epiphanius*.

De corona
milit. c. 3. & de
monogam.
c. 10.
* Ep. 66.

But I am not to consider the Arguments for the Doctrine it selfe, although the probability and faire pretence of them may help to excuse such persons who upon these or the like grounds doe heartily believe it. But I am to consider that whether it be true or false, there is no manner of malice in it, and at the worst, it is but a wrong error upon the right side of charity, and concluded against by its Adversaries upon the confidence of such Arguments, which possibly are not so probable as the grounds pretended for it. *Numb. 13:*

And if the same judgement might be made of any more of their Doctrines, I think it were better men were not furious, in the condemning such Questions which either they understood not upon the grounds of their proper Arguments, or at least consider not, as subjected in the persons, and lessened by circumstances, by the innocency of the event, or other prudential considerations. *Numb. 14:*

But the other Article is harder to be judged of, and hath made greater stirres in Christendome, and hath been dasht at with more impetuous objections, and such as doe more trouble the Question of Toleration. For if the Doctrine of Transubstantiation be false (as upon much evidence we believe it is) then tis accused of introducing Idolatry, giving Divine worship *Numb. 15:*

Deut. 13.

Numb. 16.

to a Creature, adoring of bread and wine, and then comes in the precept of God to the Jewes, that thoſe Prophets who perſwaded to Idolatry ſhould be ſlaine.

But here we muſt deliberate, for it is concerning the lives of men, and yet a little deliberation may ſuffice: For Idolatry is a forſaking the true God, and giving Divine Worſhip to a Creature or to an Idoll, that is, to an imaginary god, who hath no foundation in eſſence or exiſtence: And is that kind of ſuperſtition which by Divines is called the ſuperſtition of an undue object: Now it is evident that the Object of their Adoration (that which is repreſented to them in their minds, their thoughts, and purpoſes, and by which God principally if not ſolely takes eſtimate of humane actions) in the bleſſed Sacrament, is the only true and eternall God, hypotatically joyned with his Holy humanity, which humanity they believe actually preſent under the veile of the Sacramentall ſignes: And if they thought him not preſent, they are ſo farre from worſhipping the bread in this caſe, that themſelves profeſſe it to be Idolatry to doe ſo, which is a demonſtration that their ſoule hath nothing in it that is Idololatricall. If their confidence and fancyfull opinion hath engag'd them upon ſo great miſtake (as without doubt it hath) yet the will hath nothing in it, but what is a great enemy to Idolatry, *Et nihil ardet in inferno niſi propria voluntas*: And although they have done violence to all Philoſophy, and the reaſon of man, and undone and cancelled the principles of two or three Sciences, to bring in this Article, yet they have a Divine Revelation whoſe literall and Grammaticall ſenſe, if that ſenſe were intended, would warrant them to doe violence to all the Sciences in the Circle; and indeed that, Tranſubſtantiation is openly and violently againſt naturall reaſon, is an Argument to make them diſbelieve, who believe the myſtery of the Trinity in all thoſe niceties of explication which are in the Schoole (and which now adayes paſſe for the Doctrine of the Church) with as much violence to the principles of naturall and ſupernaturall Philoſophy, as can be imagin'd to be in the point of Tranſubſtantiation.

Numb. 17.

1. But for the Article it ſelfe, we all ſay that Chriſt is there preſent ſome way or other extraordinary; and it will not be amiſſe

amiſſe to worſhip him at that time, when he gives himſelfe to us in ſo myſterious a manner, and with ſo great advantages; eſpecially ſince the whole Office is a Conſociation of divers actions of Religion and Divine Worſhip. Now in all opinions of thoſe men who think it an act of Religion to communicate and to offer; a Divine Worſhip is given to Chriſt, and is tranſmitted to him by mediation of that action and that Sacrament, and it is no more in the Church of *Rome*, but that they differ and miſtake infinitely in the manner of his preſence; which error is wholly ſeated in the Underſtanding, and does not communicate with the will; for all agree that the Divinity and the Humanity of the Sonne of God is the ultimate and adequate object of Divine Adoration, and that it is incommunicable to any creature whatſoever, and before they venture to paſſe an Act of Adoration, they believe the bread to be annihilated or turn'd into his ſubſtance who may lawfully be worſhipped; and they who have theſe thoughts, are as much enemies of Idolatry, as they that underſtand better how to avoid that inconvenience which is ſuppoſed to be the crime, which they formally hate, and we materially avoid: This conſideration was concerning the Doctrin it ſelfe.

2. And now for any danger to mens perſons for ſuffering ſuch a Doctrin, this I ſhall ſay, that if they who doe it, are not formally guilty of Idolatry, there is no danger that they whom they perſwade to it ſhould be guilty; and what perſons ſoever believe it to be Idolatry, to worſhip the Sacrament, while that perſwaſion remaines will never bee brought to it, there is no feare of that: And he that perſwades them to doe it by altering their perſwaſions and beliefes, does no hurt but altering the opinions of the men, and abuſing their underſtandings; but when they believe it to be no Idolatry, then their ſo believing it is ſufficient ſecurity from that crime which hath ſo great a tincture and reſidency in the will, that from thence only it hath its being criminall. *Numb. 18.*

3. However, if it were Idolatry, I think the Precept of God to the Jewes of killing falſe and Idolatrous Prophets will be no warrant for Chriſtians ſo to doe: For in the caſe of the Apoſtles and the men of *Samarina*, when *James* and *John* would *Numb. 19.*

have cald for fire to deſtroy them even as *Elias* did under *Moses* Law, Chriſt diſtinguiſhed the ſpirit of *Elias* from his own Spirit, and taught them a leſſon of greater ſweetneſſe, and conſign'd this truth to all Ages of the Church, that ſuch ſeverity is not conſiſtent with the meekeneſſe which Chriſt by his example and Sermons hath made a precept Evangelicall: At moſt it was but a Iudiciall Law and no more of Argument to make it neceſſary to us, then the Moſaicall precepts of putting Adulterers to death, and trying the accuſed perſons by the waters of jealouſie.

Numb. 20. And thus in theſe two Inſtances, I have given account what is to be done in Toleration of diverſity of opinions: The reſult of which is principally this: Let the Prince and the Secular Power have a care the Common-wealth be ſafe. For whether ſuch or ſuch a Sect of Chriſtians be to be permitted is a queſtion rather Politicall then Religious; for as for the concerns of Religion, theſe inſtances have furniſhed us with ſufficient to determine us in our duties as to that particular, and by one of theſe all particulars may be judged.

Numb. 21. And now it were a ſtrange inhumanity to permit Jewes in a Common-wealth, whoſe intereſt is ſerved by their inhabitation, and yet upon equall grounds of State and Policy, not to permit diſſering Sects of Chriſtians: For although poſſibly there is more danger, mens perſwaſions ſhould be altered in a commixture of divers Sects of Chriſtians, yet there is not ſo much danger when they are changed from Chriſtian to Chriſtian, as if they be turn'd from Chriſtian to Jew, as many are daily in *Spaine* and *Portugall*.

Numb. 22. And this is not to be excuſed by ſaying the Church hath no power over them *quo foris ſunt* as Jewes are: For it is true the Church in the capacity of Spirituall regiments hath nothing to doe with them, becauſe they are not her Dioceſſe: Yet the Prince hath to doe with them, when they are ſubjects of his regiment: They may not be Excommunicate any more then a ſtone may be kild, becauſe they are not of the Chriſtian Communion, but they are living perſons parts of the Common-Wealth, infinitely deceived in their Religion, and very dangerous if they offer to perſwade men to their opinions, and are the

the greateſt enemies of Chriſt whoſe honour and the intereſt of whoſe Service a Chriſtian Prince is bound with all his power to maintaine. And when the Queſtion is of puniſhing diſagreeing perſons with death, the Church hath equally nothing to doe with them both, for ſhe hath nothing to doe with the temporall ſword, but the Prince whoſe Subjects equally Chriſtians and Jewes are, hath equall power over their perſons; for a Chriſtian is no more a ſubject then a Jew is, The Prince hath upon them both the ſame power of life and death, ſo that the Jew by being no Chriſtian is not *foris*, or any more an exempt perſon for his body, or his life then the Chriſtian is: And yet in all Churches where the ſecular power hath temporall reaſon to tolerate the Jewes, they are tolerated without any ſcruple in Religion; which thing is of more conſideration, becauſe the Jewes are direct Blaſphemers of the Sonne of God, and Blaſphemy by their own Law the Law of *Mofes* is made capital; And might with greater reaſon be inflicted upon them, who acknowledge its obligation then urg'd upon Chriſtians as an Authority, enabling Princes to put them to death, who are accused of accidental and conſequutive Blaſphemy and Idolatry reſpectively, which yet they hate and diſavow with much zeale and heartineſſe of perſwaſion. And I cannot yet learn a reaſon why we ſhall not be more complying with them, who are of the houſhold of Faith; for at leaſt they are children though they be but rebellious children (and if they were not, what hath the Mother to doe with them any more then with the Jewes?) they are in ſome relation or habitude of the Family, for they are conſigned with the ſame Baptiſm, profeſſe the ſame Faith delivered by the Apoſtles, are erected in the ſame hope, and look for the ſame glory to be revealed to them, at the coming of their Common Lord and Saviour, to whoſe Service according to their underſtanding they have vowed themſelves: And if the diſagreeing perſons be to be eſteemed as Heathens and Publicans, yet not worſe, *Have no company with them*, that's the worſt that is to be done to ſuch a man in S. Pauls judgement, *Yet count him not as an enemy, but admoniſh him as a brother.*

SECT. XXI.

Of the duty of particular Churches in allowing Communion.

Numb. 1.

FROM these premises, we are easily instructed concerning the lawfulness or duty respectively of Christian Communion, which is differently to be considered in respect of particular Churches to each other, and of particular men to particular Churches: For as for particular Churches, they are bound to allow Communion to all those that profess the same Faith upon which the Apostles did give Communion; For whatsoever preserves us as Members of the Church, gives us title to the Communion of Saints, and whatsoever Faith or belief that is to which God hath promised Heaven, that Faith makes us Members of the Catholick Church: Since therefore the Iudicial Acts of the Church are then most prudent and religious when they nearest imitate the example and piety of God: To make the way to Heaven straighter then God made it, or to deny to communicate with those whom God will vouchsafe to be united, and to refuse our charity to those who have the same Faith, because they have not all our opinions, and believe not every thing necessary which we over-value; is impious and Schismaticall, it inferres Tyranny on one part, and periwades and tempts to uncharitableness and animosities on both; It dissolves Societies, and is an enemy to peace, it busies men in impertinent wranglings, and by names of men and titles of factions it consignes the interested parties to act their differences to the height, and makes them neglect those advantages which piety and a good life bring to the reputation of Christian Religion and Societies.

Numb. 2.

Cap. 11.

Vid. Pacian.

Epist. ad Sem-

pron. 2.

And therefore *Vincentius Lirinensis*, and indeed the whole Church accounted the *Donatists* Hereticks upon this very ground, because they did imperiously deny their Communion to all that were not of their persuasion; whereas the Author of that opinion for which they first did separate, and make a Sect, because they did not break the Churches peace nor magisterially prescribe to others,

others, were in that disagreeing and error accounted Catholicks, *Divisio enim & divisio facit vos hareticos, pax & unitas faciunt Catholicos* said S. Austin; and to this sense is that of S. Paul, *If I had all faith and had not charity, I am nothing*: He who upon confidence of his true beliefe denies a charitable Communion to his brother, loses the reward of both. And if Pope Victor had been as charitable to the *Asiaticks* as Pope Anicetus, and S. Polycarp were to each other in the same disagreeing concerning Easter, Victor had not been *κατακληρονόμος* *κατακληρονόμος*, so bitterly reprov'd and condemn'd as he was for the uncharitable managing of his disagreeing by *Polycrates* and *Irenaeus*; *Concordia enim quae est charitatis effectus est iuxta voluntatum non opinionum*. True Faith which leads to charity leads on to that which unites wills and affections, not opinions.

I. 2. c. 95.
contra Iulian.
Petilian.

Euseb. l. 5. c. 25.
26.

Aquin. 2.
q 37 a 1.

Upon these or the like considerations, the Emperour Zeno publish'd his *ἐκτέλεσις* in which he made the *Nicene* Creed to be the medium of Catholick Communion, and although he liv'd after the Councell of *Chalcedon*, yet he made not the Decrees of that Councell an instrument of its restraint and limit, as preferring the peace of Christsendome, and the union of charity farre before a forced or pretended unity of perswasion, which never was or ever will be real and substantiall; and although it were very convenient if it could be had, yet it is therefore not necessary because it is impossible; and if men please, whatever advantages to the publick would be consequent to it, may be supply'd by a charitable compliance and mutuall permission of opinion, and the offices of a brotherly affection prescrib'd us by the Lawes of Christianity: And we have seen it, that all Sects of Christians, when they have an end to be serv'd upon a third, have permitted that liberty to a second, which we now contend for, and which they formerly deny'd but now grant, that by joyning hands, they might be the stronger to destroy the third. The *Arrians* and *Meletians* joyn'd against the Catholicks: The Catholicks and *Novatians* joyn'd against the *Arrians*. Now if men would doe that for charity which they doe for interest, it were handsomer and more ingenuous; For that they doe permit each others disagreeings for their interest's sake,

Numb. 3.

convince

convinces them of the lawfullneſſe of the thing, or elſe the unlawneſſe of their own proceedings, and therefore it were better they would ſerve the ends of charity then of faction, for then that good end would hallow the proceeding and make it both more prudent and more pious, while it ſerves the deſign of religious purpoſes.

SECT. XXII.

That particular men may communicate with Churches of different perſwaſions, and how farre they may doe it.

Numb. 1:

AS for the duty of particular men in the Queſtion of communicating with Churches of different perſwaſions, it is to be regulated according to the Lawes of thoſe Churches; for if they require no impiety, or any thing unlawfull as the condition of their Communion, then they communicate with them as they are Servants of Chriſt, as Diſciples of his Doctrine and ſubjects to his Laws, and the particular diſtinguiſhing Doctrine of their Sect hath no influence or communication with him who from another Sect is willing to communicate with all the Servants of their Common Lord: For ſince no Church of one name is infallible, a wiſe man may have either the miſfortune or a reaſon to believe of every one in particular, that ſhe erres in ſome Article or other, either he cannot communicate with any, or elſe he may communicate with all, that doe not make a ſinle or the profeſſion of an errour to be the condition of their Communion. And therefore, as every particular Church is bound to Tolerate diſagreeing perſons in the ſenſes and for the reaſons above explicated; ſo every particular perſon is bound to Tolerate her, that is, not to reſuſe her Communion when he may have it upon innocent conditions: For what is it to me if the Greek Church denies Proceſſion of the third Perſon from the ſecond, ſo ſhe will give me the right hand of Fellowſhip, (though I aſſum it) therefore

fore becauſe I profeſſe the Religion of Jeſus Chriſt, and retain all matters of Faith and neceſſity? But this thing will ſcarce be reduced to praſtiſe, for few Churches that have fram'd bodies of Confeſſion, and Articles, will endure any perſon that is not of the ſame confeſſion; which is a plaine demonſtration that ſuch bodies of Confeſſion and Articles doe much hurt, by becomming inſtruments of ſeparating and dividing Communion, and making unneceſſary or uncertain propoſitions a certaine means of Schiſm and diſunion: But then men would doe well to conſider whether or no ſuch proceedings doe not derive the guilt of Schiſm upon them who leaſt think it, and whether of the two is the Schiſmatick? he that makes unneceſſary and (ſuppoſing the ſtate of things) inconvenient impoſitions, or he that diſobeyes them, becauſe hee cannot without doing violence to his conſcience believe them? Hee that parts Communion, becauſe without ſinne hee could not entertain it, or they that have made it neceſſary for him to ſeparate, by requiring ſuch conditions which to man are ſimply neceſſary, and to his particular are either finfull or impoſſible?

The Summe of all is this, There is no ſecurity in any thing or to any perſon, but in the pious and hearty endeavours of a good life, and neither ſinne nor error does impede it from producing its proportionate and intended effect: becauſe it is a direct deletery to ſin and an excuſe to errors, by making them innocent, and therefore harmleſſe. And indeed this is the intendment and deſign of Faith: For (that we may joyn both ends of this Diſcourſe together) therefore certain Articles are preſcribed to us, and propounded to our underſtanding, that ſo we might be ſupplied with inſtructions, with motives and engagements to incline and determine our wills to the obedience of Chriſt. So that obedience is juſt ſo conſequent to Faith, as the acts of will are to the diſtates of the underſtanding: Faith therefore being in order to obedience, and ſo farre excellent as it ſelfe is a part of obedience or the promoter of it, or an engagement to it; it is evident that if obedience and a good life be ſecured upon the moſt reaſonable and proper groupds of

Numb. 21

Chriſtianity, that is, upon the Apoſtles Creed, then Faith alſo is ſecur'd. Since whatſoever is beſide the duties, the order of a good life, cannot be a part of Faith, becauſe upon Faith, a good life is built; all other Articles by not being neceſſary, are no otherwiſe to be requir'd, but as they are to be obtain'd and ſound out, that is, morally, and ſallibly, and humanely; It is fit all truths be promoted ſaſely and properly, and yet but few Articles preſcribed Magiſterially, nor framed into Symbols and bodies of Confeſſion; leaſt of all after ſuch compoſures, ſhould men proceed ſo furioſly as to ſay all diſagreeing after ſuch declarations to be damnable for the future, and capitall for the preſent. But this very thing is reaſon enough to make men more limited in their preſcriptions, becauſe it is more charitable in ſuch ſuppoſitions ſo to doe.

Numb. 3.

But in the thing it ſelfe, becauſe few kinds of errors are damnable, it is reaſonable as few ſhould be capitall. And becauſe every thing that is damnable in it ſelfe and before Gods Judgement Seat, is not diſcernable before men (and queſtions diſputable are of this condition) it is alſo very reaſonable that fewer be capitall then what are damnable, and that ſuch Queſtions ſhould bee permitted to men to believe becauſe they muſt be left to God to judge. It concernes all perſons to ſee that they doe their beſt to finde out truth, and if they doe, it is certain that let the errour be never ſo damnable, they ſhall eſcape the errour or the miſery of being damn'd for't. And if God will not be angry at men for being invincibly deceiv'd, why ſhould men be angry one at another? For he that is moſt diſpleaſed at another mans errour, may alſo be tempted in his own will, and as much deceived in his underſtanding: For if he may fail in what he can chuſe, he may alſo fail in what he cannot chuſe: His underſtanding is no more ſecur'd then his will, nor his Faith more then his obedience. It is his own fault if he offends God in either but whatſoever is not to be avoided; as errors, which are incident oftentimes even to the beſt and moſt inquiſitive of men, are not offences againſt God, and therefore not to be puniſhed, or reſtrained by men; but all ſuch opinions in which the publick intereſts of the

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Common-wealth, and the foundation of Faith, and a good life, are not concern'd, are to be permitted freely, *Quisquis abundet in sensu suo* was the Doctrine of S. Paul, and that is Argument and Conclusion too; and they were excellent words which S. Ambrose said in attestation of this great truth,

Nec Imperiale est libertatem dicendi negare, nec sacerdotale quod sentiat non dicere.

“ΛΥΘ’ ΙΝΕΡΘ’.

THE END.
